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WOMEN'S LIBERATION
in
SAMUEL RICHARDSON'S NOVELS

by
UJWALA PATIL

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of English
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
at the
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the study of Samuel Richardson's feminism in the three novels Pamela, Clarissa Harlowe and Sir Charles Grandison in relation to the Women's Liberation Movement.

Chapter I deals with the advocacy of women's rights in the three novels.

Chapter II attempts to study his male characters in the novels, as male chauvinists, whose attitudes prove that female subordination has no biological basis.

Chapter III focuses attention on the discussion of the heroines in the three novels as feminists who anticipate some important trends in the Women's Liberation Movement.

The study of his feminism reveals that the word "feminism" in Richardson must be understood in its broad sense. Its meaning must not be restricted to the advocacy of women's rights. His heroines show an intense awareness of their identity as human beings.

My study of Richardson's feminism shows how he curiously anticipated certain ideas in the current movement for woman's emancipation.

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INTRODUCTION

Samuel Richardson was one of the few important eighteenth-century writers who looked at life from the woman's point of view, and who showed a keen understanding of their problems. We are conscious of a feminine consciousness in his novels, of an interest in woman not as a sexual stereotype but as an individual. In a letter to his Dutch admirer and translator Stinstra, Richardson wrote:

Men and women are brothers and sisters, they are not of different species; and what need be obtained to know both, but to allow for different modes of education, for situation and constitution or, perhaps I should rather say, for habits, whether good or bad.¹

The letter suggests his realization of the fact that the distinction between the sexes is the result of unequal opportunities and of prejudicial attitudes of society.

His works take on a new meaning in the light of feminism. His novels evidence immense psychological penetration in the investigation of the problem of sexual politics, and indicate that the area of struggle for sexual equality is not merely economic, social and political, but psychological and emotional as well. We are told, he was always happiest in feminine society, believing, as he once confided to Miss Highmore after the tedium of three meetings with his friend "the good Dr. Heberdeen," "that there is nothing either improving or

¹ Samuel Richardson, *Correspondence*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), V, 263.

delightful out of the company of intelligent women."² It is a plausible conjecture that Richardson's experiences as amanuensis of the young women who came to him to write their love-letters may have given him that interest in women and that comprehension of them which distinguishes him from the other writers of his century.

Fielding's heroines are conventional in conception. Sophia Western is the accomplished type of the "man's woman" of the eighteenth century. Her chief recommendation to her creator, lay in the fact, to which Mr. Allworthy gives such approving expression, that she possesses "the highest qualification for a good wife, - deference to the understanding of men." Squire Western's sister, the unsought, unmated woman is sketched with brutal contempt; so is Smollett's Tabby in Humphry Clinker. Tabby was apparently a dyslogistic type name for an old maid, before it was applied to a humble species of cat.³ In contrast, Richardson's single women, Miss Towers and Miss Clements, are both learned and respectable. Fielding's Amelia, who earns everybody's approbation, does not have scholarship; and unlike Richardson's Clarissa, she thrives on her dependent status. Even Defoe, whose heroine Moll Flanders Virginia Woolf admired so much because to her she represented a heroine who so fully realized one of the ideals of feminism, makes no demand for the abolition of artificial distinctions

² A. D. McKillop, Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist (Chapel Hill, 1936), pp. 62, 189.

³ Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (Berkeley, 1964), p. 144.

between the sexes. He aims at no lofty ideal. When Moll and Roxana trade their sex for a livelihood they strengthen the already existing belief that women were merely objects of sexual attraction, and they could be defined only in terms of their relationship with men. They reinforce this conviction by deciding in favour of a dependent state. Richardson's struggles were in the direction of liberating women from being considered mere sex-objects. He defied contemporary opinion⁴ by insisting that they also were, in the fullest sense, human beings like men, gifted with equal capacities. The underlying goal is no less than a reconditioning of the people to accept sex equality as the norm of social and personal behaviour. It would mean a redefinition of the relation between men and women. Interestingly, this is the basic issue of the Women's Liberation Movement.

What seems strange, then, is that very few scholars and critics of Richardson have given due consideration to his women as liberated "individuals". Even an eminent critic like Mrs. Dorothy Van Ghent is guilty of a radical flaw in her essay on Clarissa.⁵ She neglects to consider them as individualists, women whose instincts tell them that they must not be used, must not be degraded to the status of objects.

4 The opinion expressed by Lord Chesterfield in his Letters, John Bradshaw, ed., Vol. 1 (London: 1892), represents probably the opinions of nine out of ten men of the century - "Women, then, are only children of a larger growth; ...but for solid reasoning, good-sense, I never in my life knew one that had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for four and twenty hours together... (5th September 1948, p. 141)...Women, especially are to be talked to, as below men, and above children. If you talk to them too deep, you only confound them, and lose your own labour;...(20th Sept. 1948, p. 149)

5 "Clarissa Harlowe" in Samuel Richardson, ed. John Carroll (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969), pp. 49-67.

The anonymous writer of the article, "Samuel Richardson and George Meredith," published in MacMillan's Magazine considers Richardson as a feminist, but holds a very narrow view of his feminism. To this author, Richardson's feminism consists merely in his (Richardson's) unconventional view of women. He says:

His women, in spite of their wretched education, are interested in a few things besides the hunt for a husband. Clarissa manages a dairy and reads history and theology. Miss Byron can enter intelligently into the good talk on general subjects which she reports to the Venerable Circle. But especially ought women to be grateful to him for this, that he familiarized the readers of his time with a high conception of women's friendship... It used to be a common thing to depreciate the friendships of women for each other. In youth they were summarized as "schoolgirl nonsense," experiments in sentiment which the first love affair would put an end to, in maturity as a last resource of a disappointed spinster....⁶

Christopher Hill's article, "Clarissa Harlowe and Her Times," concentrates on the "effect on individuals of property marriage." Both Clarissa and Lovelace, in their different ways struggle against the degradations of such marriages and the values behind them. He does not, however, take freely into account the complexities of the warfare in which both Clarissa and Lovelace participate, viz. the war between the sexes. Only W. Sales Jr.'s essay "From Pamela to Clarissa,"⁸ comes near to discussing at least Clarissa as a free woman.

The purpose of this thesis is to study Richardson's heroines as women seeking self-realization, as women who have the courage to live a life according to the law of their own being, who have the courage to create a personal life-style. We can hope to see, at least, that this

6 Vol. LXXXV (1902), pp. 359-360.

7 In Samuel Richardson, ed. John Carroll pp. 102-124.

8. Ibid., pp. 39-49.

goal is the implied motive behind the revolt of Clarissa and Clementina. Massimo Teodori's statement provides an apt explanation of their revolt..

Individual moral revolt and a desire for non-conformity in all aspects of existence which relate to life-style, come to assume the significance of freedom and of human (and therefore political) liberation themselves, in a context in which both the economic system and social institutions gradually tend, explicitly or implicitly, to invade and define every aspect of the citizens' lives, restricting the fundamental rights of self-realization, self-expression and control over one's own life.⁹

Richardson indicates a belief in every woman's right to free herself from unjust exploitation. It is this trait that aligns Richardson with feminists like Betty Friedan whose book The Feminine Mystique ignited the Women's Liberation Movement, and Germaine Greer, whose book The Female Eunuch, reveals her intolerance of the cultural attitudes that tend to unjustly exploit women and condemn them to sex roles.

As its secondary purpose, then, this thesis aims at establishing a relation between Richardson and the Women's Liberation Movement.

9 Massimo Teodori as quoted by Edwin F. Casebeer, Herman Hesse (New York, 1972), p. 197.

CHAPTER I

RICHARDSON'S FEMINISM

I could by the comparisons drawn from the gentlemen and ladies within the circle of my acquaintance, produce instances, which are so flagrantly in their favour, as might make it suspected, that it is policy more than justice, in those who would keep our sex unacquainted with the more eligible turn of education, which gives the gentlemen so many advantages over us in that; and which will shew, they have none at all in nature and genius.

I dare not, Sir, conjecture whence arises this more than parity in the genius of the sexes, among the above persons, notwithstanding the disparity of education and the difference in opportunities of each....¹

writes Pamela to her dearest Mr. B.

Both Belford and Anna Howe confirm Pamela's opinion. Belford writing to Lovelace in contempt of his contrivances to ensnare Clarissa observes:

And after all, I see not when men are so frail without importunity, that so much should be expected from women, daughters of the same fathers and mothers, and made up of the same brittle compounds (education all the difference), nor, where the triumph is in subduing them.²

Anna writes to Belford

I think our sex inferior in nothing to the other but in want of opportunities, of which the narrow-minded mortals industriously seek to deprive us, lest we should surpass them as much in what they chiefly value themselves upon, as we do in all the graces of a fine imagination....³

¹ Samuel Richardson, Pamela (London, 1914), Vol. II, pp. 415-417.

² Samuel Richardson, Clarissa (London, 1932), Vol. II, p. 159.

³ Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 497.

In Sir Charles Grandison, the very proposition of the debate held between the men and women is indicative of the implications embedded in the above quotations. Charlotte Grandison writing to Lucy Selby informs her of the debate on "Man's usurpation, and woman's natural independency," where Mrs. Shirley acting as the "moderatrix" makes the following comments:

I think women are generally too much considered as a species apart.....

But, in common intercourse and conversation why are we perpetually considering the sex of the person we are talking to? Why must women always be addressed in an appropriated language; and not treated on the common footing of reasonable creatures? And why must they, from a false notion of modesty, be afraid of showing themselves to be such and affect a childish ignornace?

I do not mean, that I would have women enter into learned disputes, but I think there is a degree of knowledge very compatible with their duties; therefore, not unbecoming them, and necessary to make them fit companions for men of sense: a character in which they will always be found more useful than that of a plaything, the amusement of an idle hour.

No person of sense, man or woman, will venture, to launch out on a subject with which they are not well acquainted. The lesser degree of knowledge will give place to the greater. This will secure subordination enough. For the advantages of education, which men must necessarily have over women, if they have made the proper use of them, will have set them so forward on the race, that we can never overtake them. But then don't let them despise us for this, as if their superiority were entirely founded on a natural difference of capacity: despise us as women, and value themselves merely as men: for it is not the hat or cap which covers the head, that decides the merit of it.⁴

What Richardson implies in these observations is very clear. He defines women as an oppressed group and traces the origin of women's

⁴ Samuel Richardson, Sir Charles Grandison (New York, 1970), Vol. VII, pp. 8-9.

subjugation to male-defined and male-dominated social institutions and value-systems. The mental differences supposed to exist between men and women are but the natural effects of the differences in their education and circumstances, and indicate no radical inferiority of nature in women.

The woman's problem, then, involves basically the issues of power and privilege, domination and subordination, dependence and independence.

I

Richardson's novels are representative of his feminist ideology. This intention is manifest in the choice of subject-matter, of situations, and even of imagery. In all the three novels, the story most concerns itself with the preservation of virtue, where "virtue" (erroneously) is equated with chastity. The choice is significant, in that, of all the virtues, chastity more than any other pointedly centres round sex. Moreover, a double significance in this subject is evident, when we remember that Richardson has been popularly recognized as both an admirer of the female sex and a writer of conduct books. In Richardson, chastity takes on both its moral and physical aspects. The attempt of the male characters on the virtue of the heroines can be symbolically viewed as an attempt to denigrate them to the status of sex objects.

There are in Richardson recurring situations - abductions, rapes and attempted rapes, and totalitarian impulses by families or individuals. These situations Richardson exploits to illuminate the "woman's problem" and to assert the injustice in its existence.

In his novels, the male lovers enjoy a uniformly superior social

position over the female ones; and despite what Morris Golden⁵ has to say, I am inclined to think that there is a deep significance in the class distinctions. It involves a complex scheme of symbolism when viewed with a reference to the relationship between the sexes, and hence a merely psychological interpretation is incorrect.

By creating a difference in the social standings of the lovers, Richardson implied that the relationship between the sexes is to be viewed in a political light, where politics "shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another..."⁶

In Pamela, when Mr. B fails to make Pamela yield to his vile designs, he tries to assert his authority. In a dominating tone he asks her, "Do you know to whom you speak?" and we know, since we have already been alerted by Pamela's poor parents in their warning to her—"...yet I tremble to think what a sad hazard a poor maiden of little more than fifteen years of age stands against the temptations of this world, and a designing gentleman, if he should prove so, who has so much 'power' to oblige, and has a kind of 'authority' to command as your master." The significance of class distinction is further illuminated when Pamela in her imprisonment on Mr. B's

⁵ "...The make up of Richardson's mind is far more important in determining these positions on the basis of a fantasy of dominance than is some scheme of symbolism involving the relations between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie." In Richardson's Characters (Ann Arbor, 1963), p. 12.

⁶ Kate Millett, "Theory of Sexual Politics" in Sexual Politics (New York, 1970), p. 23.

Lincolnshire estate, reflecting on the helplessness of her parents to render any help, tragically comments: "For what can the abject poor do against the mighty rich, when they are determined to oppress?"⁷

Again in Clarissa Lovelace's whole affair with Miss Betterton centres round his egotistical desire to subdue the arrogance of the middle-class which dreams of "raising itself" to belong to the aristocracy:

Miss Betterton was but a trademan's daughter. The family indeed were grown rich, and aimed at a new line of gentry; and were unreasonable enough to expect a man of my family would marry her....⁸

The main incentive behind Lovelace's continued oppression of Clarissa is his rage at the Harlowe family's pretences to aristocratic life-style and their pride in their "acquired fortunes." When Belford urges Lovelace to marry Clarissa, his arrogant reply is indicative of his disdain for such classes, and his desire to trample over their pride:

Then what a triumph would it be to the 'Harlowe pride' were I now to marry this lady! A family beneath my own! No one in it worthy of an alliance with, but her! My own estate not contemptible! Living within the bounds of it to avoid dependence upon expectations still so much more considerable! My person, my talents — not to be despised, surely — yet rejected by 'them' with scorn. Obligated to carry on an underhand address to 'their' daughter, when two of the most considerable families in the kingdom have made overtures which I have declined, for her sake, and partly because I never will marry, if she be not the person. To be forced to steal her away, not only from 'them', but from herself! And must I be brought to implore forgiveness and reconciliation from the Harlowes? Beg to be acknowledged as the son of a gloomy tyrant whose only boast is his riches? Forbid it the blood of the Lovelaces,...should thus creep,

⁷ Pamela, Vol. I, pp. 12, 9, 83.

⁸ Clarissa, Vol. II, p. 147.

thus fawn, thus lick the dust, for a Wife! ⁹

James Harlowe's inhuman treatment of Clarissa grows out of what Clarissa more than once has mentioned to Anna Howe — "the darling view" entertained by some families which have great substance and cannot be satisfied without rank or title:

...My brother, as the only son, thought the two girls might be very well provided for ten or fifteen thousand pounds apiece; and that all the estates in the family: to wit my grandfather's, father's and two uncles; with what he had an expectation from his god-mother, would make such a noble fortune and give him such an interest, as might entitle him to hope for a peerage.¹⁰

James's "grasping views" encourage in him a mean opinion of the female sex — "that daughters were but encumbrances and drawbacks upon a family...that, to induce people to take them off their hands, the family stock must be impaired into the bargain...."¹¹

Another moral implication in Richardson's dramatization of class society, refers to the double standard of morality. Mr. B, Lovelace, and Sir Hargrave Pollexfen in Sir Charles Grandison, all belong to the upper class society, and enjoy aristocratic licentiousness sanctioned by the eighteenth-century moral code. Lovelace proudly declares, "My predominant passion is 'girl' not 'gold'; nor value I this, but it helps me to that and gives me independence".¹² Lovelace explains the rationale behind such a code to Belford:

Nor say thou that virtue, in the eye of Heaven, is as much a manly as a womanly grace. By virtue in this place I

⁹ Clarissa, Vol. II, pp. 34, 35.

¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 53, 54.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 54.

¹² Ibid., Vol. II, p. 39.

mean chastity, and to be superior to temptation...Nor ask thou: shall the man be guilty, yet expect the woman to be guiltless, and even unsuspectable? Urge thou not these arguments, I say, since the wife, by a failure, may do much more injury to the husband than the husband can do to the wife, and not only to her husband, but to all his family, by obtruding another man's children into his possessions, perhaps to the exclusion of (at least to a participation with) his own; he believing them, all the time to be his. In the eye of Heaven, therefore, the sin cannot be equal...Virtue then, is less to be dispensed with in the woman than in the man.

Thou, Lovelace (me thinks some better man than thyself will say), to expect such perfection in a woman! Yes, I may answer...Go to, then, Jack; nor say, nor let anybody say in thy hearing, that Lovelace, a man valuing himself upon his ancestry, is singular in his expectations of a wife's purity, though not pure himself.¹³

The above quote is also indicative of the influence of the masculine mystique. Mr. B. and the others cannot tolerate even the thought of mental infidelity in their women. Mr. B suffers moments of agonised anxiety because he cannot bear the thought of any other man supplanting him in Pamela's affections: "the very apprehension," he tells Pamela, "has made me hate the name of Williams, and use him in a manner unworthy of my temper."¹⁴ Lovelace is an extremist even in this. Sounding a warning note about the consequences to Clarissa, he writes to Belford, "Be her preference of the single life to me also remembered."¹⁵

Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, who does not even have a right to Harriet Byron's love, allows the "green-eyed monster" to overpower him:

¹³ Clarissa, Vol. II, p. 39.

¹⁴ Pamela, Vol. I, p. 188.

¹⁵ Clarissa, Vol. III, p. 190.

...I own I have pride. Forgive me; it is piqued.
 I believe I should not have been rejected by any lady,
 who had no dislike to a change of condition; and
 was disengaged. You declare that you are so; and
 if I am willing, I am desirous to believe you -
 and yet that Greville.¹⁶

They are all, as we shall see, male chauvinists who revel in the idea of the woman's personal subjection; hence the thought that she might prefer someone else is destructive to their monstrous egos, since it signifies her rejection of the whole principle of personal subjection. It would be a denial of her dependence and an act of open rebellion against a dully constituted patriarchal authority and a complete refutation of male superiority.

These moral implications of the class society thus make it clear that Women's Liberation can be made possible only with the ending of class society, and women must oppose male chauvinism and domination in personal life. The Women's Liberation movement today is itself a revolt against the capitalist society which encourages discrimination and male domination. The movement has some radical members who are motivated by the anti-male spirit in their demand for liberation. Their demand is for total freedom from dependence including sexual dependence. These gay liberationists as they are called want sex education curricula to include lesbianism as a valid and legitimate form of sexual expression and love.

Richardson's fascinating heroine Clarissa betrays this anti-male spirit, as we shall see later. What is interesting is that Richardson more than two hundred years ago, when women had few rights,

¹⁶ Sir Charles Grandison, Vol. I, p. 139.

adopted the same line of thinking and crusaded for the cause of women.

Richardson's propagandistic zeal in the cause of women is manifest even in the choice of his narrative technique. The epistolary technique, besides affording scope to write of the "moment" becomes indicative of the intellectual emancipation of women, for the intellect was just one of the things denied the eighteenth-century woman.

Harriet Byron comments: "Who I, a woman, know anything of Latin and Greek! I know but one lady who is mistress of both; and she finds herself so much an owl among the birds, that she wants of all things to be thought to have unlearned them.... In what a situation, Lucy, are we women! — If we have some little genius, and have taken pains to cultivate it, we must be thought guilty of affectation, whether we appear desirous to conceal it, or submit to have it called forth."¹⁷

Her bitter irony indicates the anti-intellectualistic attitude of the age towards women, and hence the significance of Richardson's narrative technique. B. L. Reid's disgust with Pamela's learning is understandable because he ignores the fact that it has another "functional" implication. He says,

No servant girl, and no fifteen year old miss of any station, ever talked like this. I do not refer to her flux or her redundancy — which seem to me functional, charming and believable — but to her vocabulary, her range of reference, and her sentence structure, the general hand rubbed finish of the discourse. Her rhetoric is superb, but in terms of character it is also absurd. The book is one long unbroken example of what I mean, and it is not even necessary to quote to prove the point.¹⁸

¹⁷ Sir Charles Grandison, Vol I, pp. 57,60.

¹⁸ Hudson Review IX (1956-57), pp. 517-518.

To me, Pamela's range of knowledge is Richardson's deliberately conceived idea. It is admittedly an exaggeration of probability. He takes pains to convince us that Pamela was naturally very intelligent and, besides, was excessively fond of reading and writing, thus preparing us to accept Pamela's snatching a few moments, just before going down to breakfast with the waiting bridegroom, to write to her parents about the flutterings of her heart. Pamela has a free access to her lady's library, and her lady herself has taken a great deal of interest in improving the mind of her waiting maid. Mr. B too takes a keen interest in the "improvement" of her mind, and declares more than once that it is her mind that has made her his wife. It is all a bit unconvincing, yet it seems to serve Richardson's purpose of promoting the feminist cause. It illustrates the falsity of the masculine mystique's assumption that the female sex is biologically limited and its inferior status has been biologically determined; it shows that biology is a trap laid by the male chauvinists. It neither explains nor justifies an assumption of masculine superiority.

Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* is all mind: Belford's panegyric of *Clarissa's* intellectual accomplishments is only one of Richardson's many zealous expressions. In eighteenth-century fashion, Belford goes to the length of saying:

She is in my eye all mind: and were she to meet with a man all mind likewise, why should the charming qualities she is mistress of be endangered? Why should such an angel be plunged so low as into the vulgar offices of domestic life? Were she mine, I should hardly wish to see her a mother, unless there were a kind of moral certainty that minds like hers be propagated. For why, in short, should not the work of bodies be left to mere bodies?¹⁹

¹⁹ *Clarissa*, Vol. II, pp. 243-244.

And concludes that there is:

...more exalted pleasure in intellectual friendship, than²⁰
ever thou couldst taste in the gross fumes of sensuality?

This indeed is an instance of Richardson's radicalism. The only education the high minds of the eighteenth century allowed women was a training in nothing but the superficial accomplishments. Why, they argued, should a girl who was to be married at sixteen or seventeen years of age be educated for any purpose but that of attracting men? The basis of the training was sexual. Reading and reflection were regarded as privileges of men only. In the eighteenth century for her personal happiness, her social status and her economic prosperity, marriage was for a woman an indispensable condition. Richardson, however, protested against this traditional view, and Belford's praise of Clarissa as an intellectual is significant. Higher education for women on an equal basis with men was one of the chief objectives of the feminists, and Clarissa's acceptance as an intellectual implies such an objective in Richardson. It also implies that marriage is not the only goal. Women should be given opportunities to realize their potentialities with freedom. It indicates a revolt against stereotyped attitudes toward women. The Women's Liberation Movement too, is desperately trying to free women from being victimised by such stereotyped attitudes. The famous bra burning demonstration was but a symbolic expression of women's refusal to be treated as sex objects. In her perceptive book, The Feminine Mystique, Betty Friedan expresses indignation against the sex-directed educators who persuaded women to seek the shelter of home and made the kitchen the centre of their

20 Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 16.

lives.

Richardson's attitudes to marriage also manifest his interest in the feminist cause. First of all he demanded that every woman should have a right to choose her partner. Unreasonable parental authority did not receive his moral sanction. Anna Howe explains to Clarissa,

You must not, your uncle tells my mother, dispute their authority. Authority! What a full word is that in the mouth of a narrow-minded person, who happened to be born thirty years before one! Of your uncles I speak; for as to the parental authority, that ought to be sacred. But should not parents have reason for what they do?²¹

That he gave his women freedom to question implicit obedience is a great stride towards the recognition of woman's free will, in the exercising of which lies the key to liberation. Clarissa's tragedy is a severe criticism of the unreasonableness of unlimited parental authority.

Harriet Byron is independent of her family in the choice of a husband, and she marries Richardson's ideal man, Sir Charles Grandison.

Dependent on the state of legal and economic supremacy is the psychological attitude of the sexes to each other.²² Richardson only too well recognized the importance of economic independence and legal justice. It is important to understand that economic independence was consciously as well as unconsciously perceived to be a direct threat to male authority.²³

²¹ Clarissa, Vol. I, p. 64.

²² Viola Klein, The Feminine Character (London, 1946) p. 9.

²³ Kate Millett, Sexual Politics, p. 87.

The serious implications inherent in economic dependence, Richardson conveyed through Clarissa's intensified tragedy. The sexist prejudices of her patriarchal family deny her the right to own the property her grandfather has left to her. Anna Howe realizes the importance of economic independence and urges Clarissa to assert her right and demand the property that rightly belongs to her. She even suggests litigation in order to secure the estate. Clarissa decides against litigating for two reasons; because of her filial piety and also because the legal system is full of loopholes to the disadvantage of women. Had Clarissa been economically independent it is a plausible conjecture that her tragedy would have been much abated, for Clarissa has the courage to seek a personal life-style. In spite of her stringent circumstances she refuses to appeal to her family for economic help. No one more than she realized the significance of economic independence.²⁴

The eighteenth century feminine code of delicacy imposed restrictions on woman's free expression and contributed in no less a degree to keep her in a subordinated position. Dr. Johnson, Richardson's friend, was of opinion that "the delicacy of the sex should always be inviolably preserved, in eating, in exercise, in dress, in everything."²⁵ Thus a tight net of prejudices surrounded and hampered all her movements. Women were expected to cultivate

²⁴ "One of the most efficient branches of patriarchal government lies in the agency of its economic hold over its female subjects. In traditional patriarchy, women, as non persons without legal standing, were permitted no actual economic existence as they could neither own nor earn in their own right." Kate Millett, Sexual Politics, p. 30.

²⁵ Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel, p. 162.

mildness of manner, a subdued and soft tone of voice, and were warned to avoid conversation upon learned subjects. "If you happen to have learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts and a cultivated understanding."²⁶ That was the warning given her.

But Richardson was an avowed reformer in this sphere. Harriet Byron, who yearns to own her love for Sir Charles, feels restricted from doing so because of the taboo imposed by the code, and she, being naturally open and sincere, finds it even more difficult to contain herself and questions the code.

Self, my dear Lucy, is a very wicked thing; a sanctifier, if one would give in to its partialities, of actions, which in others we should have no doubt to condemn. Delicacy too is often a misleader; an idol, at whose shrine we sometimes offer up our sincerity; but in that case, it should be called indelicacy.

And are there some situations, in which a woman must conceal her true sentiments? in which it would be thought immodesty to speak out? Why was I born with a heart so open and sincere? But why indeed, as Sir Charles has said in his letter relating to the Danbys, should women be blamed, for owning modestly a passion for a worthy and suitable object? ...What a littleness is there in the custom that compels us to be insincere?....²⁷

Harriet's reference to "custom" which blames "women" for frankness of expression, points to the fact that woman's suppression has nothing to do with their "inherent nature" but is the natural outcome of a man-made culture, an example of how taboos linger on in the form of prejudices and social habits.

²⁶ Dr. John Gregory: A Father's Legacy to His Daughters. Quoted in The Feminine Character, p. 37.

²⁷ Sir Charles Grandison, Vol. III, pp. 35-36.

Richardson's heroines Pamela and Clarissa insist on reformation in the morals of their suitors, before they can even think of giving consent to proposals of marriage. Harriet Byron has not this problem, for Sir Charles, as pure as Richardson's women, is a virgin until marriage. This is an instance of Richardson's plea for a single standard of morality. Richardson's acceptance of Sally Godfrey in Pamela and Mrs. Oldham in Sir Charles Grandison indicate a struggle toward this single standard. The struggle is also manifest in the suggestions made by Miss Towers and Lady Davers and others, including the men, with regard to reinstating the so-called "fallen women".

Lady Towers told him it was a thing as unaccountable as it was unreasonable, that every rake who loved to destroy virtue, should expect to be rewarded with it: and if his brother B had come off well, she thought no one else ought to expect it.

Lady Davers said, it was a very just observation and she thought it a pity there was not a law, that every man who made a harlot of an honest woman, should be obligated to marry one of another's making.²⁸

Richardson's conscious attitude toward the single standard of morality, resembles the attitude of the Victorians, described as "illogical" by Kate Millett. She perceives the goal of a sexual revolution to be "a permissive single standard of sexual freedom".²⁹

Victorians...while they strove to remove the onus from the "fallen women",...tried with frequently naive optimism to raise boys to be as pure as girls.³⁰

²⁸ Pamela, Vol. II, p. 124.

²⁹ Sexual Politics, p. 62.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 63.

Richardson, however, showed a slight, unconscious leaning towards the acceptance of a permissive single standard of sexual freedom. It comes out in his tendency of making excuses for the "fallen women", of placing blame on the men, who were too artful for the innocent women, and above all ⁱⁿ his argument that love may

...insensibly steal upon a soft heart; when once admitted, the oaths, vows, and protestations of the favoured object, who declaims against the deceivers of his sex, confirm her good opinion of him, till having lull'd asleep her vigilance, in an unguarded hour he takes advantage of her unsuspecting innocence. Is not such a poor creature to be pitied?³¹

Lady Davers' opinion of Sally Godfrey, whom her brother has ruined, is significant in this connection:

He dearly loved her...and notwithstanding her fault, she well deserved it: for she was a sensible, ay, and a modest lady, and of an ancient and genteel family. But he was heir to a notable estate, was of a bold and enterprising spirit, fond of intrigue — ... Then he did not like the young lady's mother, who sought artfully to entrap him. So that the poor girl, divided between her inclination for him, and her duty to her designing mother, gave into the plot upon him: and he thought himself—vile wretch as he was for all that!—at liberty to set up plot against plot, and the poor lady's honour was the sacrifice.³²

Sir Charles Grandison's benevolent behaviour toward Mrs. Oldham and the children born of free-living with his father is also an indication of the same tolerant attitude. If man's licentiousness can be tolerated, a woman's weakness too can receive a permissive attention. Even Lady Davers, who has given us an impression of a conservative woman in her behaviour toward her brother and Pamela,

³¹ Pamela, Vol. II, pp. 125-126.

³² Ibid., p. 24.

adopts quite a liberal attitude towards Sally. Even Pamela's acceptance of the child and Sally Godfrey indicates a certain toleration of her moral weakness. Though Richardson could never have given way to the temptation of open toleration, it is quite believable the thought might have occurred to him, in view of his great love for the female sex.

Richardson in all these attitudes indicates the desirability of a change -- a change which would alleviate the anti-feminism of a society that we now regard as tyrannically patriarchal.

CHAPTER II

THE MALE CHAUVINISTS

Mr. B, Lovelace and the subordinate male characters in Sir Charles Grandison, all display abundant evidence of male chauvinistic attitudes. Their attempts on the virtue of the heroines show that the myth of masculine superiority is somehow preserved in the area of physical strength.

"At heart, to the male chauvinist, every woman is his wife",¹ says Michael Korda, and the wife represents an object of sex gratification. The attitudes of Mr. B, Lovelace, Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, and Greville toward women confirm Michael Korda's definition.

The very moment Mr. B sets his eyes on Pamela, she becomes a desirable sex object. The "four pair of white stockings, three pair of fine silk ones, and two pair of 'rich stays' ", become indicative of his sexual interest. Pamela receives them with a blush - "Don't blush Pamela! Dost think I don't know pretty maids should wear shoes and stockings?" says Mr. B with a smile. The sexual symbolism of the clothes which has already been made evident by Pamela's "blush" is made even more explicit by Pamela's father:- "I cannot but renew my cautions on your master's kindness, and his free expressions about the stockings...Arm yourself, my dear child, for the worst, and resolve to lose your life sooner than your virtue".²

¹ Male Chauvinism (New York, 1972), p. 153.

² Pamela, Vol. I, pp. 8-9.

Lovelace, the most interesting of Richardson's male characters; announces with arrogant pride to Belford, "My predominant passion is for girl..."³ Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, a pitiable villain, even before he sees Harriet Byron, conceives of her as a sex object, though after he meets her, he falls in love with her so suddenly and so violently that he decides to make her his wife.

All the three, in order to satisfy their lust for "power" and sexual appetite, try various stratagems, stratagems which tend to denigrate Pamela, Clarissa and Harriet to the status of sex objects.

Mr. B first tries cajoling Pamela into yielding to him, "I tell you, I will make a gentlewoman of you, if you be obliging..." When he fails to win through flattery, he resorts to the use of another weapon. He threatens to use force, which is the boast of every male chauvinist. "Pretty fool," he says, "how will you forfeit your innocence if you are obliged to a force you cannot withstand?" Pamela resists him most vehemently. Her unprecedented resistance (since it is beyond Mr. B to imagine that he would be repulsed by a maid-servant) increases his passion. He becomes aggressive and in despair has recourse to verbal aggression. He fears exposure, for then his self-respect would be at stake:

And so I am to be exposed am I...in my own house, and out of my house, to the whole world, by such a saucebox as you? ...Assurance as you are!...you little equivocator!...Insolent!...am I to be questioned thus by such a one as you?⁴

When even his verbal aggressiveness does not attain the

³ Clarissa, Vol II, p. 20.

⁴ Pamela, Vol. I, pp.12, 20, 97.

desirable results, he stoops to using physical force in order to revenge himself on her. On the pretext of sending her back to her parents, he kidnaps her and imprisons her in the house at his Lincolnshire estate, where he attempts rape. To keep a strict surveillance over her, he chooses Colbrand and the masculine Mrs. Jewkes. The choice is significant in that it confirms Mr. B's male chauvinism, his belief that physical superiority is sufficient to claim dominance over Pamela. The figures of Colbrand and Mrs. Jewkes offer physical threat to Pamela. They both have repulsive and frightful physical appearance. Mrs. Jewkes is an ugly mass of flesh. Pamela describes her to her parents:

She is a broad, squat, pursey, fat thing, quite ugly, if anything human can be so called...she has a huge hand, and an arm as thick as my waist, I believe...she has a hoarse man-like voice, and is as thick as she's long: and yet looks so deadly strong, that I am afraid she would dash me at her foot in an instant....

About Colbrand she writes,

He is a giant of a man for stature...I never saw such a one in my life. He has great staring eyes, like the bull's that frightened me so....⁵

That Pamela finds an analogy between his eyes and the bull's is significant because the bull symbolizes brute strength, thus helping to confirm Mr. B's male chauvinistic attitudes.

The abduction, the imprisonment and the attempt at rape all denote once again Mr. B's arrogant assertion of his belief that physical superiority is criterion enough to treat women as an inferior sex.

⁵ Pamela, Vol I, pp. 97, 145.

These situations are also specific examples of Mr. B's persecution mania, which is typical of all Richardson's male characters except his Sir Charles Grandison. This persecution complex becomes symptomatic of the egotistical desire of men to subject women to their domination.

There is still another implication in the situations which recur in all the three novels. Both abduction and rape denote desire for illicit sexual intercourse. Since sexual intercourse in rape presupposes male dominance, it is peculiarly suited to the temperaments of all Richardson's male characters who seek to dominate. Mr. B attempts rape, Sir Hargrave Pollexfen threatens it, and Lovelace commits one.

The rape is also symbolic of aggressiveness of the male, since it is independent of the co-operation of the female. The position of intercourse in rape is necessarily what Elizabeth Davies explains as the "missionary or christian position" where the male assumes the dominant position of being on the top, in the belief that because in this position "the woman is hemmed in, is his prisoner and cannot escape..."⁶ Rape ascertains at least physical possession, but Mr. B's physical superiority is over-matched by Pamela's moral integrity, and even this hope meets with frustration.

Mr. B's entire behaviour during the attempt is demonstrative of all his complex emotions; aggressiveness, contempt and desire to violate Pamela's personality. The shame of defeat has made him outrageously egotistical, and his hurt pride will find satisfaction only by asserting the pure masculine mystique. With the help of

⁶ The First Sex (London, 1971), p. 317.

Mrs. Jewkes, that hideous mass of flesh, he manages to make Pamela virtually his prisoner, during the attempt. "...The guilty wretch" Pamela later reports, "took my left arm, and laid it under his neck, and the vile procuress held my right; and then he clasped me round my waist!"⁷ "His voice", continues Pamela, "broke upon" her, "like a clap of thunder" - "Now Pamela...is the dreadful time of reckoning come, that I have threatened...You see, now you are in my power! You cannot get from me nor help yourself: yet have I not offered any thing amiss to you. But if you resolve not to comply with my proposals, I will not lose this opportunity: if you do, I will yet leave you."⁸ Mr. B's triumph is the triumph of the male chauvinist.

Male chauvinists tend to be aggressive in their relationship to women, at least in the verbal sense. They want to impress, seize, capture, subdue women; they dream of sexual triumphs, they confuse sexuality with strength....⁹

This description of a male chauvinist, which is aptly applicable to Mr. B, is also applicable to Lovelace and Sir Hargrave Pollexfen. These situations are a symbolic expression of Richardson's belief that men's claim to superiority can hardly be justified. Women have been relegated to a subordinate position by force, that is by the male mental attitude. It is unfair and unjust to deny women what is theirs, by right - their freedom, the freedom to choose their own way of life, which Pamela makes Mr. B realize through her struggle to maintain the integrity of her personality. Through her attitudes she compels Mr. B to give in to her terms. Richardson's assertion of

⁷ Pamela, Vol I, p. 178.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 178-179.

⁹ Male Chauvinism, p. 51.

of the unjust treatment meted out to women is brought home to us by his tendency to "exalt the sex" in each of his novels. All his heroines emerge triumphant over the male characters. Clarissa is triumphant even in her death.

Mr. B, Pamela's "relentless persecutor," being won by her successful resistances to his repulsive sexual advances, submits to a "life of shackles" and admits:

All these accomplishments have engaged my affections so deeply, that, as I have often said, I cannot live without you; and I would divide, with all my soul, my estate with you, to make you mine upon my own terms. These you have absolutely rejected; and that, though in saucy terms enough, yet in such a manner, as makes me admire you the more. Your pretty chit-chat to Mrs. Jewkes, the last Sunday night, so innocent, and so full of beautiful simplicity half disarmed my resolution before I approached your bed: and I see you so watchful over your virtue, that, though I hoped to find it otherwise, I cannot but confess my passion for you is increased by it. But now, what shall I say further, Pamela?...¹⁰

After his happy union with her, he most lovingly tells her:

...Your mind is as pure as that of an angel, and as much transcends mine. Your wit, your judgement, to make you no compliment, are more than equal to mine: you have all the graces that education can give a woman, improved by a genius which makes those graces natural to you, you have a sweetness of temper, and a noble sincerity, beyond all comparison; and in the beauty of your person, you excel all the ladies I ever saw. Where, then, is the obligation, if not on my side, to you? — But let us talk of nothing henceforth but equality....¹¹

But though Mr. B admits to Pamela that she has qualities which entitle her to an equal status with him, his behaviour and attitudes proclaim a contrary opinion. "So strong is the male chauvinist's image of what the relationship between men and women should be...that he

¹⁰ Pamela, Vol I, p. 189.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 314.

simply cannot accept women as 'equal' human beings or deal with them on their own merits,"¹² says Michael Korda. Mr. B, who could not endure the thought of marriage, has been in a way forced into it by Pamela's stubborn attitude, and in marrying he has forfeited his rakish freedom. As if to make up for the loss he assumes the role of a domineering husband. He tries to cast Pamela in the role of a docile and submissive wife, who will readily comply with the demands of his tyrant will. On one occasion when Pamela interferes to make peace between Lady Davers and Mr. B, Mr. B's warning to Pamela is indicative of his instinctive desire to exert power and keep Pamela under subjection. In consequence and on the pretext of the interference Mr. B prescribes forty-eight articles, which are definitive propositions for the wifely behaviour he expects from Pamela. Michael Korda, whose book on Male Chauvinism is so illuminating, says in his chapter on "The Domestic Chauvinist":

In marriage men learn that the surest way to protect their freedom is to restrict the freedom of someone else; they attempt, given half a chance, to assert their will and individuality; choosing precisely the institution where it is most necessary to give up a measure of individuality and will, relying upon the fact that it is easier to impose oneself on one person than on the world at large.¹³

Mr. B's sexist attitudes sufficiently evince his aggressive masculine sense of superiority and could easily lead to a prolonged misery within the marital relationship. Had Pamela been less aware of her personal worth and had she given in to him by recognizing an obligation to implicit obedience, such would indeed have been the case.

¹² Male Chauvinism, p. 155.

¹³ Ibid., p. 154.

Pamela, however, is too much of an individual to allow tyrannical domination.

Mr. B, asserting what he calls the "male prerogative," refuses to comply with Pamela's request to allow her to nurse her own children. Mr. B's refusal on the grounds of her sexual role as a wife, who must preserve her beauty for the pleasure of her husband, is a denial of a human right, her right to motherhood. It reveals the tendency of a male chauvinist to confine the woman to the role of a sex partner, where Pamela's sexual role will be primarily a passive one and where her value as an individual will still be determined by her ability to attract, please, and hold on to a man. Like all sexists, then, Mr. B defines Pamela's role in terms of her relation with him, and not in terms of her as an individual - "My fondness for your personal graces" says he, "and the laudable, and I will say, honest pleasure, I take in that easy genteel form, which everybody admires in you, at first sight, oblige me to declare, that I can by no means consent to sacrifice these to the carelessness into which I have seen very nice ladies sink, when they become nurses..."¹⁴ So he, like any other domestic chauvinist, expects Pamela to "sell herself," not just her body but her entire "life, interests, and dreams,"¹⁵ to him.

Richardson's animal imagery in Pamela becomes denotative of sexist attitudes. The bull represents both brute strength and the phallus. When Pamela wants to escape her prison, her plan is foiled by

¹⁴ Pamela, Vol. II, p. 229.

¹⁵ Kathy McAfee and Myrna Wood, "Bread and Roses", in From Feminism to Liberation, collected by Edith H. Altbach (London, 1971), p. 25.

two bulls, one possessed of the spirit of her master Mr. B and the other of the spirit of Mrs. Jewkes. The bull which possesses the master's spirit is objectified as the phallic symbol, symbolizing seduction and sexual threat through physical force: "...I looked and saw the bull, as I thought between me and the door...so I got in again for fear he should come at me."¹⁶ Thus the bull becomes symbolic of male supremacist attitudes.

The other bull possessed of the spirit of Mrs. Jewkes is also indicative of physical threat. Mrs. Jewkes is Mr. B's assistant, and, during Mr. B's attempt at rape, she assists with physical force to hold Pamela a prisoner until the sex act can be performed.

The bull becomes part of Pamela's vocabulary, and each time, it suggests a threat of sexual violation. Pamela makes the symbolism of the bull very clear when she says, "But let bulls, bears, lions, tigers, and, ~~what is worse~~, false, treacherous, deceitful men, stand in my way, I cannot be more in danger than I am...."¹⁷

Later Pamela develops an image where she perceives the woman as prey, and the man as the marauding animal that preys. Mr. B. is the vulture and Pamela is the pretty lamb that is to be sacrificed. This image becomes a manifestation of the relations between the sexes and establishes the sexist prejudice.

II

In Clarissa, the sexist attitudes find the most revealing expression in the authoritarian nature of the patriarchal family and in

¹⁶ Pamela, Vol I, pp. 131-132.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 146.

the attitudes of the arrogant Lovelace, who, as I have already indicated, is a proud male chauvinist.

Clarissa writes to Anna Howe that her father like all schooled in sexism has "not (any more than my brother) a kind opinion of our sex, although there is not a more condescending wife in the world than my mother."¹⁸ Clarissa's father goes beyond what was generally agreed to be his legitimate paternal rights, and demands not only that Clarissa give up Lovelace but that she marry Solmes, and, when she protests, he thunders,

No expostulations! no buts, girl! No qualifyings! I will be obeyed, I tell you; and cheerfully too! — or you are no child of mine!¹⁹

Clarissa's father demands from her implicit obedience. She is expected to marry the odious Solmes in order to facilitate the realization of James Harlowe's, a son's, ambition, the ambition of attaining a peerage, and her father treats her inhumanly when she refuses an alliance with the "ugly toad". Clarissa's father, through his behaviour, exemplifies sexist prejudices, and like every male chauvinist indicates his interest in exerting control. "Male chauvinism is just the effort to exert control."²⁰ Also, he behaves in a way traditional to a patriarchy in which the "status of both child and mother is primarily or ultimately dependent upon the male. And since it is not only his social status, but even his economic power upon which his dependents generally rely, the position of the masculine figure within

¹⁸ Clarissa, Vol. I, p. 36.

¹⁹ Clarissa, Vol I, p. 37.

²⁰ Male Chauvinism, p. 209.

the family as without is materially, as well as ideologically, extremely strong."²¹ Acting within this male dominated institution, James Harlowe thinks nothing of victimizing Clarissa. What irritates James is the fact that Clarissa, (to use Arabella's term), "a daughter too," should be preferred to him in the grandfather's will. His arrogant pride and the monstrous male ego suffer a wound, and in treating Clarissa inhumanly he is only displaying a sexist prejudice. This chauvinistic attitude is to be perceived in the mean opinion he holds about women. Anna Howe thinks his attitude too openly "imperious" towards women. Being the son of the family, he has everybody on his side. The unity of the male members with their male-supremacist determination to compel Clarissa to yield all chances of her own happiness in order to support the ambitious designs of a son, is a powerful argument against unjust male dominance and the unreasonable exercise of the patriarchal authority. The family makes no scruples about telling her: "On your single will depends all our happiness,"²² suggesting that Clarissa must therefore decide on a course of self-sacrifice.

Even Solmes, a backboneless character, can boast of the male prerogative of exacting obedience from a wife, and persists in his persecution of Clarissa by continuing his addresses in spite of her avowed declaration against marrying him because of a positive aversion towards him. He, however, forms his hopes on the belief that "if love and fear must be separated in matrimony the man who made himself

²¹ Sexual Politics, p. 35.

²² Clarissa, Vol. I, p. 54.

feared fared best,"²³ thus exhibiting a sexist attitude, with the knowledge that he would have both religious and societal sanction to tyrannize over his wife. Here Richardson is referring to the sexual slavery of marriage as the basis of the oppression of women.

Clarissa's family thus carries the oppression to its logical extreme, and Clarissa, in order to escape this unbearable situation is compelled, however unwillingly, and unhappily for her, to throw herself into Lovelace's power. Lovelace, by means of cunning contrivances, has made it impossible for Anna Howe to offer refuge to Clarissa, and the prejudices of the male-dominated society have left no avenue open to her. She laments to Anna the fact that "the manner of our training up and education, make us need the protection of the brave, and the countenance of the generous..."²⁴ Lovelace exploits every disadvantage of her situation to keep her in his power and dominate over her.

Lovelace is the most arrogant male chauvinist of the three. He, who prefers "his pride to his interest", is of opinion that "woman was made for the man, not man for the woman, and man is the woman's sun,"²⁵ with an obvious implication that woman must therefore live in subjection to man. Quoting the "gentle Waller" he says, "Women are born to be controlled."²⁶ Lovelace's main intention is to condemn Clarissa to the status of a sex object, to make her live with him what he calls the "life of honour". In an endeavour to achieve this

²³ Ibid., p. 207.

²⁴ Ibid., Vol I, p. 200.

²⁵ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 403.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 416.

end, he employs many of the same tricks as Mr. B. The fact that Clarissa escapes home to protect her own freedom and not out of love for him, gives deep offence to Lovelace's ego, and Clarissa offers a challenge to his manhood by insisting on a reformation in his morals before she can even think of considering his proposal to marry him, which we know he has made only half-heartedly. The idea that a man is rather to be the woman's prize than she his, is unbearable to a male chauvinist who is used to indulging in thoughts of sexual triumphs. Clarissa like Pamela (but Clarissa is of grander stature) repulses Lovelace's sexual advances, and Lovelace who alternates between feelings of love, pride, and revenge, reaches a stage when he begins to fear "she presumes to think that she can be happy without me."²⁷ How can this student of sexism tolerate such a condemnation of his masculinity? It would mean the collapse of the masculine mystique, which forms the edifice of all his triumphs. "But her indifference, Belford!" he says with emphasis, "I cannot bear."²⁸ With a fierceness that surprises Clarissa he declares, "... We were born for one another: you must be mine - you shall be mine... although my damnation were to be the purchase!"²⁹ Ironically, it is only damnation he purchases by his relentless persecution of her. The only way left to him to subordinate Clarissa is force.

Lovelace, virtually imprisons Clarissa in a brothel and waits for

²⁷ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 7.

²⁸ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 39.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

an opportunity when he can "overpower" her, and subdue her "pride", as he calls it. His physical strength is overmatched, as he indicates to Belford, and he has to employ a mean method in order to violate her chastity. He administers opiates, and when she is in a state of unconsciousness he rapes her.

The implication of the rape is forcefully brought home when after the rape he writes to Belford. "The affair is over. Clarissa Lives!"³⁰ as if he expected her to die, and his surprise is indicative of his motives, the motives he has so blatantly expressed; "I have three passions that sway me by turns; all imperial ones. Love, revenge, ambition or desire of conquest."³¹ His insulted and injured masculinity seeks satisfaction in "Vendetta," — "for did not the sex begin with me?"³² he asks Belford, referring to his disappointed love affair, in which he felt deceived by one of Clarissa's sex. Clarissa's sense of conscious superiority, which has been an affront to the "masculine mystique," goads him on to the crime. His complex motivations include his disdain for the jealously guarded "sexual virtue" of the middle classes³³ and his love of contrivance and intrigue, which make him disregard others' selfhood. But why Clarissa? Since Clarissa is the "most admirable of women," it would be "such

³⁰ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 196.

³¹ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 302.

³² Ibid., p. 15.

³³ It is interesting to remember in this connection that the Women's Movement in England from the 1850's until First World War was dominated by that sense of propriety and respectability which was the hall mark of the middle classes during that period, so much so that some male opposition to the women's vote was based on the fear that women might impose strict moral standards upon society. Constance Rover, "Introduction" to Love Morals and the Feminists (London, 1970), p. 1.

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a triumph over the whole sex"³⁴ if he subdued her. And then his hatred of the Harlowes is a high provocation with him. Hence the rape he commits exemplifies not merely physical violation. Its purpose as we know is "to ensure, as a final measure the acceptance" by Clarissa and hence by all women; "of the inevitability of male domination... Its basis is not male achievement but maleness itself."³⁵ Lovelace's rape is intended to be the "insulting violation of personhood, the degradation, the devastating affront to dignity."³⁶ It destroys her mind (at least temporarily), her body, and above all it becomes the destroyer of her innermost selfhood. In raping, Lovelace injures her deepest sense of pride and dignity and her worth. His rape thus becomes a rape of self-respect, of her right to freedom and free-will. With Lovelace, whose motive behind the rape of Clarissa is the desire to subdue the whole sex, rape becomes a political act on the premise that women are a class; and women's oppression "is a conscious expression of the male need to dominate."³⁷ To him a sexual attack is a "display of power allowed by a sexist society." It becomes indicative of the contemptuous treatment of women by men, which makes Clarissa cry out in tragic intensity: "What a world is this! - What is there in it desirable? The good we hope for, so strangely mixed, that one does not know what to wish for! And one half of mankind tormenting the other and being tormented themselves in tormenting."³⁸

³⁴ Clarissa, Vol. II, p. 15.

³⁵ Barbara Mehrhof and Pamela Kearon, "Rape: An Act of Terror" in Radical Feminism, ed. Anne Koedt (New York, 1973), p. 229.

³⁶ Majority Report, New Jersey, June 27, 1974, p. 11.

³⁷ Helen Dudar, "Women's Lib: The War on 'Sexism' in The Other Half", ed. Epstein and Goode (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1971), p. 169.

³⁸ Clarissa, Vol. II, p. 29.

Clarissa complains about the condemnation of woman to the depersonalized, dehumanized status of an object, the injustice of which Belford tries to explain to Lovelace:

...As to the great article of fidelity to your bed. Are not women of family who are well educated under greater restraints than creatures, who, if they ever had reputation, sacrifice it to sordid interest, or to more sordid appetite, the moment they give up to you? Does not the example you furnish, of having succeeded with her, give encouragement for others to attempt her likewise? For with all her blandishments, can any man be so credulous, or so vain, as to believe that the woman he could persuade, another may not prevail upon?³⁹

And this Lovelace insists on not understanding, for in his chauvinistic pride he seeks to dominate and possess Clarissa for his personal subjection, only to realize that Clarissa can never become his "captive" mistress, and "once subdued always subdued" is not true in her case. Thus this ~~dream~~ of this male chauvinist must end as a dream only.

In view of the feminism in Richardson's novels, it is interesting that he made rape a significant situation to explain woman's oppression and sexual exploitation. It is equally interesting to note that there is a parallelism between Belford's analysis of rape contained in the above quotation and the analysis of the Women's Lib:

Rape is an act which humiliates and degrades woman establishing her as a sex object available to every man... It is an act of violence couched in sexual terms...⁴⁰

What Richardson proves in Lovelace's defeat, and what Lovelace himself later learns is "there is no triumph in force."⁴¹ One is

³⁹ Ibid., p. 332.

⁴⁰ Male Chauvinism, p. 214.

⁴¹ Clarissa, Vol. II, p. 398.

instantly reminded of what Michael Korda says, "It is no triumph to prove our masculinity, whatever that is, by using women as mirrors to reflect our success, our strength, our petty triumphs..."⁴²

Lovelace's fantasies of a married life prove him beyond doubt a domestic chauvinist who expects sexual slavery in marriage. Marriage to Lovelace is important only as a symbol of power, to be a "lord over a Clarissa's destiny." He tells Belford "the lady is mine...shall be more mine. Marriage, I see...could overpower her".⁴³ He constructs an image of her to suit his ideal of a wife. He writes to Belford of his expectations:

I would have the woman whom I honour with my name, if ever I confer this honour upon any, forgo even her superior duties for me. I would have her look after me when I go out, as far as she can see me...and meet me at my return with rapture. I would be the subject of her dreams, as well as of her waking thoughts. I would have her think every moment lost, that is not past with me: sing to me, read to me, play to me when I please; no joy so great as in obeying me. When I should be inclined to love, overwhelm with it; when to be serious or solitary, if apprehensive of intrusion, retiring at a nod; approaching me only if I smiled encouragement: steal into my presence with silence; out of it, if not noticed, on tiptoe. Be a lady easy to all my pleasures, and valuing those most who most contributed to them; only sighing in private, that it was not herself at the time... a tyrant husband makes a dutiful wife.⁴⁴

Men impose upon women the demands of their imaginations, making them, in their minds, as captive as was poor "O", says Michael Korda and quotes from an anonymous writer's classic of pornography.

You are here to serve your masters. During the day, you will perform whatever domestic duties are consigned to you. Nothing more difficult than that. But at the first sign from anyone you will drop whatever you are doing and

⁴² Male Chauvinism, p. 235.

⁴³ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 14.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 416.

ready yourself for what is really your one and only duty:
to lend yourself...⁴⁵

Lovelace too, like this anonymous writer, expects his woman to sell herself to him; like Mr. B, he expects her to devote her entire life to him, to merge her individuality in his, to lose herself completely as an individual, and live in him. Lovelace's ideal of a wife fulfills the male chauvinist's ideal of a captive woman, the wish for her subjection to him.

Lovelace's erotic fantasies center round his triumph of domination over the female sex and prove him to be a sexist par excellence. The fantasy he weaves round his mastery through rape over Mrs. Howe and party, who he imagines sailing to the Isle of Wight to a widowed sister who is rich and intends Miss Howe for an heiress, bespeaks of his interest in women as merely sex objects.

His sensual dreams concentrate on Clarissa as a loving mistress with twin Lovelaces at her lovely breasts, thus reducing Clarissa to the status of a sex object and a breeder. Lovelace does not have Mr. B's objection to nursing mothers. The fire scene, which gives him a chance to view Clarissa with nothing on but an under-petticoat, sets his sensual imagination afire, and the descriptions indicate how much he values woman as a "body" rather than as a "mind". Gloating over the sensuous sensations, in raptures over "encircling the almost disrobed body of the loveliest of her sex," he writes to Belford:

When I had flown down to her chamber, there I beheld the most charming creature in the world, supporting herself on the arm of the gasping Dorcas, sighing, trembling and ready

⁴⁵ Male Chauvinism, p. 99.

to faint...her lovely bosom half open, and her feet just slipped into her shoes...

I clasped her in my arms with an ardour she never felt before...

O Jack! how her sweet bosom, as I clasped her in mine, heaved and panted!...

I love her more than ever! And well I may! Never saw I polished ivory so beautiful as her arms and shoulders; never touched I velvet so soft as her skin; her virgin bosom — O Belford, she is all perfection!...her pretty foot equally white and delicate as the hand of any other woman or even as her own hand.⁴⁶

Thus to him as to all male chauvinists woman is sex first and last.

Her shape, her body and her sexuality are all that interest him.

Though aware of her intellectual capacities, he is not prepared to accept her as a "person"; his sexism will not allow him, in spite of all the love he has for her.

The imagery too denotes Lovelace's sexist attitude. The metaphor of the hunt informs this attitude, thus specifying the male chauvinist's ideal of a captive woman, which we have already seen in his ideal of a wife. He writes to Belford, "We begin as boys, with birds, and, when grown up, go on to women; and both, perhaps, in turn, experience our sportive cruelty. Hast thou not observed the charming gradations by which the ensnared volatile has been brought to bear with its new condition?"⁴⁷ Then he exults as he imagines the bird yielding to its captor. The comparison of this captured bird with Clarissa signifies the fact that women's subjection has no biological basis, but the basis is physical force and hence unjustifiable. Anna Howe forcefully denounces the sexist attitude of the sadistic male:

⁴⁶ Clarissa, Vol. II, p. 506.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 245-46.

"And alas!" she writes to Belford "She knew before she was nineteen years of age, by fatal experience she knew! that all these beasts and birds of prey were outdone in treacherous cruelty by MAN! Vile, barbarous, plotting, destructive man! who infinitely less excusable than those, destroys through wantonness and sport what those only destroy through hunger and necessity!"⁴⁸

Another metaphor which Lovelace is happy to employ is the metaphor of a fly. Clarissa is the "charming fly entangled in my web"⁴⁹. The metaphor of the hunt where woman is the game displays Lovelace's chauvinistic tendency to treat women as the conquered race.

That Lovelace's expectations and hopes meet with frustration is an indication of Richardson's feminism.

III

In Sir Charles Grandison, as I have already indicated, it is the subordinate characters who display sexist prejudices.

Sir Thomas is despotic like Clarissa's father though with less dignity. He holds as mean an opinion of the female sex as James Harlowe. As to James Harlowe, so to Sir Thomas, "daughters were but daughters and no question with him,"⁵⁰ but a son was his concern. He could rob his daughters of their fortune but has scruples about robbing his son. This tyrannical father with sexist prejudices holds another most unhappy opinion of the female sex. "I know your sex," he tells his daughters Charlotte and Caroline, "I have found more fools

⁴⁸ Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 467

⁴⁹ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 23.

⁵⁰ Sir Charles Grandison, Vol. II, p. 117.

in it than I have made — Indeed no man makes, or needs to make you fools. You have folly deep rooted within you...I never knew a woman in my life that was wise by experience of other people."⁵¹ Like all chauvinists, like Clarissa's father, he too tries to wield unlimited control over his daughters. Projecting an extreme desire in this direction, he thunders, "I will be my own judge of both your hearts".⁵² It has ever been the policy of men to take advantage of disadvantageous situations. He explains his own character and the character of all insecure male chauvinists when he reveals "Women's weakness is man's strength."⁵³ Harriet Byron further illuminates this statement in her reflections on her uncle's comments on women's learning, and shows how woman has been forced into an inferior position and then taken advantage of. What Richardson tries to convey is that woman is not congenitally inferior to man but has been exploited and oppressed:

Philanthrophy! — Yes, my uncle: why should women, in compliance with the petulance of narrowminded men, forbear to use words that some seem to think above them, when no other single word will equally express their sense? It will be said they need not write. Well then, don't let them read; and carry it a little further, and they may be forbidden to speak. And every lordly man will then be a grand signior, and have his mute attendant.⁵⁴

Sir Thomas' comment is particularly illuminating because it reveals the secret of man's dependency on a false superiority, with an implication of his inability to relate to women as an equal. It is

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 166.

⁵² Ibid., p. 162.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 176.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 231.

this feeling which creates the woman's problem, with its issues of monosexual domination and subordination.

The pedantic fop Walden is one of those male chauvinists who like all chauvinists argues that mental enlargement and knowledge is a male prerogative, and cultivation of physical beauty, is a woman's field, thus defining her as a sex object only.

Sir Hargrave Pollexfen and Harriet's uncle hold an opinion with regard to women that was also attractive to Lovelace, the rake whom Richardson loved in spite of himself: "man is his own, a woman is a man's."⁵⁵ The implication is obvious. Like all sexists, like Lovelace and Mr. B, they too demand that woman be defined in terms of her relation with man. They too, like Lovelace and Mr. B, are incapable of shedding the cultural habit of not viewing the woman as "equal".

Sir Hargrave, who has been attracted to Harriet, first tries to persuade her to become his wife, but when she refuses, his male ego suffers, and he too, to nurse his pricked vanity, resorts to the use of force. He abducts Harriet and once again uses persuasion, but when Harriet still refuses to marry him he threatens the "terror tactic".⁵⁶

Sir Hargrave Pollexfen exhibits the sexist's delight in his exultations over Harriet as his captive. "The vile wretch laughed" observes Harriet to Lucy. "That's you, my dear, and hugged me round. You are the d-d wife. And again laughed: By my soul, I am a charming

⁵⁵ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 137.

⁵⁶ "Rape: An Act of Terror" in Radical Feminism, p. 229.

contriver! Greville, Fenwick, Orme, where are you now? By my soul, this will be a pretty story to tell, when all your fears are over, my Byron."⁵⁷ Rape as we have already seen ensures physical possession. Sir Hargrave has not the motivations of Lovelace for rape. For Sir Hargrave it simply becomes expressive of the emotions of aggressiveness and jealousy and desire for possession of Harriet's person. Though he is not a Lovelace, he uses Lovelace's metaphor, where once again woman is the fly, a prey, and man is the spider: "My lovely fly ...how prettily have I wrapt you about in my web."⁵⁸

Sir Charles Grandison is a man of sense, and detests the use of force against any one, men or women. He recognises the superiority of Clementina and behaves accordingly with her. His behaviour towards his sisters is highly commendable. He makes them, contrary to his father's wishes, mistresses of independent fortunes and explains what prompted him:

My sisters had an equitable, if not a legal right. Right to what has been done. I found, in looking into my affairs, that, by a moderate calculation of the family circumstances, no man should think of addressing a daughter of Sir Thomas Grandison, without supposing himself entitled either by her merits or fortune, to expect 10,000/ with her - and this, even allowing to the customary preferences given to men as men; though given for the sake of pride, perhaps, rather than natural justice. For does not tyrant custom make a daughter change her name in marriage and give to a son, for the sake of name only, the estate of the common ancestor of both?⁵⁹

This is a superb instance of Richardson's feminism. In Sir Charles' reference to "customary preferences given to men as men; though given for the sake of pride, perhaps rather than natural

⁵⁸ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 208.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 242:

justice" is an assertion of what all the feminists from Mary Wollstonecroft to the Women's Liberation Movement opine: that the status of women is culturally determined, woman is relegated to a subordinate status by the sexist prejudices. They emphasize that "the arena of sexual revolution is within human consciousness even more pre-eminently than it is within human institutions. So deeply embedded is patriarchy that the character structure it creates in both sexes is perhaps even more a habit of mind and a way of life than a political system."⁶⁰ Sir Charles touches upon another important problem that confronts the feminists of to-day. The problem of "identity" and the "institution of marriage," which receive an emphasis in Sir Charles' reference to "tyrant custom" that makes a woman change her "name" and for the "sake of name only," give to a son the estate of the common ancestor. This statement, which is pregnant with meaning, shows Richardson's consciousness of the fact that marriage is a form of discrimination against women. It obliterates her identity, which means marriage is an institution where male primacy finds the most revealing expression.⁶¹ Richardson's view bears resemblance to the modern feminist Sheila Cronan's view of marriage: "Marriage is the model for all forms of discrimination against women."⁶² She follows up this statement by saying that the relationships between men and women outside of marriage follow this same basic pattern. Sheila

⁶⁰ Sexual Politics, p. 63.

⁶¹ This masculine view of marriage can be seen as the final refuge where the battered male ego can fatten up on the structured inferiority of the mate. Marriage can only work if the man is dominant.

⁶² "Marriage" in Radical Feminism, p. 219.

Cronan argues that since marriage constitutes slavery for women, the Women's Movement must concentrate on attacking this institution. Freedom for women cannot be won without the abolition of marriage.

Richardson shows an awareness of this issue when he makes Charlotte say "MATRIMONY and LIBERTY - Girlish connexion!"⁶³ However, it does not mean that he was in favour of abolishing marriage; he only hoped for a reformation, where the relationship of domination/subordination would give place to friendship in marriage.

Sir Charles Grandison like Freud tended to seek in congenital, constitutional factors the clue to what is to be considered the characteristically feminine personality type. To Charlotte's question, "Do you think that there is a natural inferiority in the faculties of the one sex? A natural superiority in those of the other?" Sir Charles' answer is:

I have no doubt but there is...There is a difference in the constitution, in the temperament, of the two sexes, that gives to the one advantages which it denies to the other...why have nature made a difference in the beauty, proportion, and symmetry, in the persons of the two sexes? Why gave it delicacy, softness, grace, to that of the woman; - strength, firmness, to men; a capacity to bear labour and fatigue; and courage, to protect the other?

Weaker powers are given generally for weaker purposes, in the economy of Providence...it is my opinion that both God and nature have designed a very apparent difference in the minds of both, as well as in the peculiar beauties of their persons. Were it not so, their offices would be confounded, and women would not, perhaps, so readily submit to those domestic ones in which it is their province to shine ...⁶⁴

The underlying assumption of this long quote can be summed

⁶³ Sir Charles Grandison, Vol. II, p. 254.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Vol. VII, pp. 13-16.

up in the statement: "Anatomy is destiny". Anatomical basis of differentiation has relegated woman to the status of a breeding machine — and the quote above would establish Sir Charles a male chauvinist, were it not for the fact that he clarified his position by insisting that he did believe there were individual exceptions among women, whose genius would be more than a match to man's. Even though Sir Charles, who would have everybody marry, is not completely guiltless of male chauvinism, he is at least not blatant like the other male characters. Sir Charles' stand with regard to women is an ambivalent one; he also suggests that the status of women is culturally determined, a point which the modern feminists insist on.

CHAPTER III

THE FEMINISTS

The Statement of Purpose of the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) proclaims:

In the interests of the human dignity of women we will protest, and endeavour to change, the false image of women...

We believe that women will do most to create a new image of women acting now and by speaking out in behalf of their own equality, freedom, and human dignity - not in pleas for any special privilege, nor in enmity toward men...but in an active, self-respecting partnership with men....¹

Back in the eighteenth century, we will see Richardson's Pamela striving towards the creation of this desirable new image of women, even though she was "dirt-poor", and "her moral equipment was drawn from the stupidest depositories of eighteenth century Protestantism, she was fixed in a menial position, in the power of an arrogant class which defined its menials as chattels and habitually used them as such."²

Pamela, very early in the novel, makes it known to Mr. B, her master, that he forfeits his right to her obedience, if he demands it in an "improper" way and to improper things. After his attempt on her virtue in the summer house, for example, Pamela announces rebelliously that she won't stay.

¹ Quoted from The Other Half, Cythia Epstein & William J. Goode eds. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1971) p. 193. N.O.W. is an organization started in 1965 under the presidency of Betty Friedan to create awareness in Women and men of their equal status.

² B. L. Reid, "Justice to Pamela" Hudson Review, p. 532.

You won't hussey! said he: Do you know whom you speak to? I lost all fear and all respect and said, yes, I do, Sir too well! - well may I forget that I am your servant, when you forget what belongs to a master.³

Pamela's rebellious answer in the circumstances has complex implications. Her refusal to yield to Mr. B indicates her rebellion against being sexually exploited and denigrated to the depersonalized status of a sex object. Secondly, it denotes her awareness of her status as a free individual, and the necessity to have it defined as such, rather than in terms of her relation to him. Again it suggests her consciousness of the fact that she as a human being has a right to be treated as a free person. She conveys this idea more forcefully when she tells him:

Whatever you have to propose, whatever you intend by me, let my assent be that of a free person, and not of a sordid slave, who is to be threatened and frightened into compliance...

I would die before I would be used thus...⁴

The above quote specifies Pamela's need to be defined as a human being rather than by any particularized role. Her entire behaviour is governed by her desire to instill in the mind of her oppressor Mr. B her title to freedom, respect and dignity as a human person, irrespective of her social status: "But, O Sir! my soul is of equal importance with the soul of a princess, though my quality is inferior to that of the meanest slave."⁵ Liberation from oppression that inhibits individuality and suppresses identity is as much Pamela's aim as it is the aim of the feminists of the N.O.W. and of all those

³ Pamela, Vol. I, p. 12.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 121, 163.

⁵ Ibid., p. 137.

interested in women's liberation from oppression by either institutions or persons. In other words, what Pamela seeks is recognition as an individual person and "fulfillment", which consists in realizing the potentials of one's personality and not merely in perpetuating the myth of the "feminine mystique"⁶ like the suburban wives of America in the nineteen-sixties. Pamela's desire for "something more" than fulfillment as a wife and mother finds a symbolic expression in her assertion: "Indeed, Sir...it is impossible I should be ungrateful to your honour, or disobedient, or deserve the names of Bold-face and Insolent, which you call me, but when your commands are contrary to that first duty which shall ever be the principle of my life."⁷ This thought later finds a more direct expression, when Pamela in her role as a housewife and mother seeks expression in teaching school to little children; she tells Mr. B, "I must needs say, my dear Mr. B, that this is a subject to which I was always particularly attentive...."⁸ Pamela's school is symbolic of a career, which Pamela thinks necessary to realize her full potential. She even declares her intentions of writing a critique of plays and

⁶ The feminine mystique argues that the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfillment of their femininity...that they can find fulfillment only in sexual passivity, male domination and nurturing maternal love. Betty Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name" in the Feminine Mystique (New York, 1970) p. 37.

⁷ Pamela, Vol. I, p. 19.

⁸ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 373.

a travelogue. That Pamela recognizes a duty which is above her duty to Mr. B is itself an indication of her rebellion against the passive and submissive feminine role. She even thinks when she becomes Mr. B's wife, it is no "compliment" to him to be "quite passive and to have no will at all of one's own..."⁹ Writing about "Women's Strategy for Victory" Caroline Hennessey suggests strategy begins "at home" in such ways as these:

Women must renounce all traditional patterns of passivity, submissiveness, docility. They must avoid at all times retreating into hurt or helplessness. They must assert themselves and their demands. Among these must be one for the application of exactly equal standards in any and all relationships with men.¹⁰

I have already indicated that Pamela warns Mr. B against expectations of implicit obedience from her, thus asserting her right as an individual.

That Pamela continues to stay in Mr. B's house after the attempted seduction in the summer house and several other attempts on her virtue has provoked a long line of critics who have been severe on Richardson for his "Cash-Register Morality". For this, Pamela has been condemned as an "artful engineer", the "virtue vendor" and the good girl with a purpose, hypocritically playing for time to trap Mr. B. Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch's essay is an example of the normal indictment of the long line of anti-Pamela critics — she is a designing minx, a coarse opportunist who held out for a good price and in the end got it.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., pp. 230-231.

¹⁰ The Strategy of Sexual Struggle, (New York, 1971), p. 203.

¹¹ Quoted by B.L. Reid in "Justice to Pamela," pp. 526, 528.

Fielding's vulgar parody of Pamela, Shamela, is a gross misrepresentation of Pamela's character, and reflects not only his envious disposition but also his male chauvinism. I am more in agreement with

B. L. Reid who says:

Pamela is so very far from conniving to ensnare Mr. B that she is completely, and completely honestly, amazed when the thing occurs. I think we cannot refuse to believe exactly what Richardson wants us to believe: that the event is the doing not of her art but her morality and her 'parts' — her beauty, her good sense, her delightful overmastering literacy. I do not mean that Richardson fails to prepare us for the idea that Pamela is unconsciously in love with Mr. B or that she will have him when he offers honestly; quite the contrary is true, he prepares us carefully, and very well. The preparation begins with that little generalizing penetration of Pamela's... (Is it not strange that love borders so much upon hate?) and continues through a long sequence of such quiet signal statements until the eventual reformation, proposal, acceptance, and felicity. Pamela's behaviour throughout is consistent, logical, and respectable. She is right to rebuff Mr. B, right to fail to hate him, and right to accept him at last.¹²

Ian Watt also does justice to Pamela and observes:

...Pamela's motivations and actions throughout seem to me to be wholly credible and consistent with any adequately complex notion of human behaviour.¹³

The point for consideration, then, is that Pamela's motivations were not as mean as the anti-Pamela critics have suggested. Pamela was not all libido as Fielding tries to make her out. Her behaviour, as B. L. Reid has suggested, is respectable and logical. Her staying on is justifiable, considering her love for Mr. B. However, she would not have him on his undignified terms — "I abhorred so much the thoughts of being a kept creature, that I rejected them with great

¹² "Justice to Pamela", pp. 529-531.

¹³ "Samuel Richardson", Listener, LXXIII (February 1965) 178.

boldness; and was resolved to die before I would consent to them,"¹⁴
 She has very high notions of self-respect and individual personality.
 She instructs Miss Goodwin on proper behaviour and insists,

...My dear, you must think justly of yourself too; for let the young gentlemen be ever so learned and discreet, your education entitles you to think as well of yourself as of them: ...you can have no reason to look upon that sex in so high a light, as to depreciate your own:... think yourself above the gentlemen and they'll think you so too, and address you with reverence and respect, if they see there be neither pride nor arrogance in your behaviour, but a consciousness of merit, a true dignity,... like that of an angel among men; for so young ladies should look upon themselves to be, and will then be treated as such by the other sex.¹⁵

What Pamela urges in the above instruction is a consciousness of feminine self-awareness, a recognition of one's own merits and potentialities, and confidence in one's worth. Pamela persuades Miss Goodwin to recognize the equality of status between the sexes, she encourages the opinion that women can be not inferior but actually "above the gentlemen". Her belief is that such a consciousness would even direct the behaviour of the other sex. Pamela's instructions are almost analogous to the "consciousness raising" interest of the Feminist Movement. Pamela's advice interestingly bears a close correspondence to similar statements of Dr. Mary Daly, who says, "We women have to create self-actualized human beings. In so doing we will create a new Mary, the New Woman. And as part of this... women will challenge men to liberate themselves from the eternal masculine..."¹⁶ It is as though Richardson had anticipated the

¹⁴ Pamela, Vol. I, p. 410.

¹⁵ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 467.

¹⁶ "Solution" in Women's Liberation, Adelstein and Pival, eds. (New York, 1972), p. 127.

obstacle the feminists would face in organizing women power because of the belief in their own inferiority, and tried to liberate them from this conditioned thinking, through "consciousness raising"¹⁷ sessions. This attitude can be perceived in Pamela's "meetings," where all young women come together to learn proper conduct, and significantly Pamela always touches on the point of behaviour between the sexes, and always urges the equality if not superiority of her own sex. The consciousness raising interest of Clarissa becomes expressed in the publication of the book which is the revelation of all her experiences. She publishes, through Anna Howe and Belford, with the specific intention of leaving herself as an example, from whose experiences the others of her sex will learn to behave.

A Pamela with so much sense of selfhood would never stoop to accept a proposal that did not become her dignity. She stayed on at Mr. B's because she was primarily interested in creating an awareness in him of her worth as a person and her right to be treated with respect and dignity. She will be his wife, because she loves him, not his harlot, even though she loves him. Mr. B soon realizes that Pamela cannot be used, cannot be denigrated to a dehumanized status of a sex object; she will not be a plaything, and hence he must conquer his pride and submit to married life on Pamela's terms. "Pamela

¹⁷ The typical consciousness-raising group is composed of six to twelve women; the process is one in which personal experiences when shared are recognized as a result not of an individual's idiosyncratic history and behavior, but of the system of sex-role stereotyping. Radical Feminism, p. 280.

finally gets her man not because she is dutiful to him, but because she succeeds in convincing him that he owes a duty to her, not merely as a woman but simply as a human being."¹⁸ Pamela strived for a respectable relationship, and she succeeded in establishing it, and not by artful means. Mr. B tells us "that her person made me her lover, but her mind made her my wife." Later he tells Pamela herself, "I always loved you, my dearest, and that with a passionate fondness... But I revere you now. And so great is my reverence for your virtue, that I chose to sit up all night, to leave you for a few days, until by disengaging myself from all intercourses that have given you uneasiness, I can convince you, that I have rendered myself as worthy as I can upon your terms."¹⁹ Pamela was thus, indeed, acting in accordance with the injunction contained in the Statement of Purpose issued by N.O.W. (quoted on p.49), the essence of which Richardson had anticipated.

"Women's Liberation has also been concerned with the process by which a woman begins to assert her rights with her family or with a man."²⁰ In her married state, which she enters with grave apprehensions (as she writes to her parents) Pamela continues her struggle for liberation, which consists in the expression of her individual personality, and in the assertion of her right to personal freedom.

Her grave apprehensions about marriage probably arise from her

¹⁸ R.F. Brissenden, "Pamela" in Twentieth Century Interpretations of Pamela, ed. Rosemary Cowler (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.), p. 53.

¹⁹ Pamela, Vol. I, p. 430, Vol. II, p. 318.

²⁰ Edith Hoshino Altbach, "Notes on a Movement" in From Feminism to Liberation, p. 13.

knowledge that the "married state is a kind of humiliation for a lady, you must think yourself subordinate to your husband..."²¹ Pamela as we have seen is a passionate lover of individual freedom, hence her lurking fears are because of the danger to her freedom in marriage. Yielding to marriage is the clearest indication of a woman's accepting restraints and male dominance; Pamela like Harriet and Charlotte has fears about the consummation of marriage. The feminists opine that the "institution of marriage" protects "women in the same way" that the institution of slavery was said to 'protect' blacks — that is, that the word 'protection' in this case is simply a euphemism for oppression."²² "Sexual intercourse...provides sexism with an inimitable act which perfectly expresses the polarity male/female. The reality created by the Ideology makes the sexual act a renewal of the feeling of power and prestige for the male, of impotence and submission for the female."²³ The institution of marriage first of all threatens freedom; it involves a loss of identity, which is the very essence of individuality, as Sir Charles Grandison is to suggest in Richardson's later novel. Again, since the sexual act presupposes male dominance, it is not impossible to understand the sexual fears of Pamela, Harriet or Charlotte.

However, Pamela marries, because, as she tells Miss Goodwin, "if you marry a gentleman like Mr. B, he will treat you like an equal."²⁴ She tells Mr. B before the nuptials:

²¹ Pamela, Vol. II, p. 467.

²² Sheila Cronan "Marriage", p. 214.

²³ "Rape: Act of Terror", p. 229.

²⁴ Pamela, Vol. II, p. 467.

But one thing Sir, I ought not to forget because it is the chief: my duty to God will I hope, always employ some good portion of my time, with thanks for his superlative goodness to me, and to pray for you and myself...²⁵

The underlying implication of this is that Pamela should not be expected to account to him for every minute of her time. She thus shatters the male chauvinist's image of an ideal wife, revealingly expressed in the forty-eight articles Mr. B. prescribes to her. Pamela insists on her right to personal freedom, which is a characteristic of any egalitarian state.

Though Pamela tells Mrs. Jewkes "O...that's a language I shall never forget: he shall always be my master; and I shall think myself more and more his servant,"²⁶ her behaviour belies the statement. Her reactions to Mr. B's forty-eight articles is an indication of her awareness of herself as an individual with rights.

One of Mr. B's articles reads "That if the husband be set upon a wrong thing" the wife must not dispute with him, but do it, and expostulate afterwards." It raises an anxious amazement in Pamela: "Good Sires, I don't know what to say to this! It looks a little hard methinks! This would bear a small debate, I fancy in a parliament of women." Another of his rules expects Pamela to be as flexible as a reed, "Lest, by resisting the tempest, like the oak, "she be torn by the roots, and Pamela's reaction to this role indicates her belief

²⁵ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 235.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 271.

in her own worth, her sense of selfhood and self-respect. "Well," she says, "I'll do the best I can! - There is no great likelihood, I hope, that I should be too perverse; yet sure, the tempest will not lay me quite level with the ground, neither." Mr. B's twenty-sixth article, which recommends the obliteration of the words "COMMAND and OBEY" receives commendation from Pamela; she says, "Very good!" which means Pamela recognizes herself not as his vassal or chattel, but as an individual with a right to respectable treatment. The most approbation, however, is received by Mr. B's forty-eighth article, that a husband who expects obedience from his wife must be "incapable of insult for obligation, or evil for good, and ought not to abridge her of any privilege of her sex." Pamela writes to her parents, "Well, my dear parents, I think this last rule crowns the rest, and makes them all very tolerable; and a generous man, and a man of sense cannot be too much obliged..."²⁷ The implication in these observations of Pamela is that she will struggle for restructuring the husband and wife relationship, so that the state of domination and subordination will not exist. Her role as a wife will not be traditionally passive and submissive. What Pamela asserts in these reactions is simply that she is first of all a 'person' and then somebody's wife. Her typical behaviour is symptomatic of her search for identity. A quote from Betty Friedan will illuminate further Pamela's intention:

The problem of identity was new for women then, truly new. The feminists were pioneering on the front edge of woman's evolution. They had to prove that women were human...They had to prove that woman was not a passive,

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 406-408.

empty mirror, not a frilly, useless decoration, not a mindless animal, not a thing to be disposed of by others, incapable of a voice in her own existence, before they could even begin to fight for the rights women needed to become equals of men.

...

The feminists had only one model, one image, one vision, of a full and free human being: man. For until very recently only men...had the freedom and education necessary to realize their full abilities... Only men had the freedom to decide for themselves in the eyes of their God the problems of right and wrong. Did women want these freedoms because they wanted to be men? Or did they want them because they also were human?²⁸

Pamela's subsequent behaviour substantiates what Betty Friedan stresses in the above quote — woman's need to define herself as a human being and not in terms of her relation with man.

In this connection, Pamela assumes an appropriate attitude toward what she deems to be the "natural duty" of a mother, which, because it is natural, is also a "divine duty."²⁹ The message implied is the assertion of one's rights.

Pamela questions Mr. B's right to interfere in the discharge of a "divine duty." "As great as a wife's obligation is to obey her husband, which is, I own, one indispensable of the 'marriage contract,' it ought not to interfere with what one takes to be a superior duty: and must not one be one's own judge of actions, by which we must stand or fall?"³⁰ Pamela, reminds Mr. B of her right to "free-will", on some greater occasions ³¹ and the occasions,

²⁸ "The Passionate Journey" in The Feminine Mystique, pp. 73-75.

²⁹ Pamela, Vol. II, p. 228.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 300

³¹ Ibid., p. 302.

of course, Pamela does not specify substantially. Pamela writes to Miss Darnford her mind on the subject of a mother's duty to nurse her own child the matter which has become an issue of great importance to Pamela. Yielding easily to Mr. B. would mean forfeiting her human right, which an individualist like Pamela will find a "little hard" to bear. "I hope it will not proceed so far as to awaken the sleeping dragon I mentioned, Prerogative by name; but I doubt I cannot give up this point very contentedly..."³² Betty Friedan would probably be impatient with her for her insistence on playing a mother's role, "nurturing motherhood", as she would say. But the point that is emphasized in Pamela's insistence is her "right"—Pamela does not get her way, but at least she creates in Mr. B an awareness of her as a human being, so that as he tells her, his respect for her was on the increase each day.

On yet another occasion, where Pamela would be expected to be a mute attendant to unjust treatment by the eighteenth-century moralists and matrimonial counselors, she behaves in a way untypical of the expectations of her age. Her domestic bliss is threatened by Mr. B's infatuation with a certain Countess, and Pamela appeals to reason to bring the matter to an issue instead of trusting to the mere merit of long suffering:

For my interest I will part with, and sooner die, than live with a gentleman who has another wife, though I was the first. Let Countesses, if they can, and ladies of birth, choose to humble themselves to this baseness. The low-born Pamela cannot stoop to it..."³³

³² Ibid., p. 214.

³³ Ibid., p. 302.

She confronts Mr. B on this issue in such a manner that Mr. B is obliged to say, "What a new Pamela have I in my arms."³⁴ She warns him, if he did not mend his adulterous ways, she would leave him with her child. It is Mr. B who almost trembles at the thought of Pamela leaving him — "Can you so easily part with me?" Pamela is very earnest to assert her right and says with vehemence, "I can Sir, and I will! — rather than divide my interest..."³⁵ The important implication in Pamela's behaviour in this matter is that Pamela shows Mr. B how she is not absolutely dependent on him. If he cannot give her the due respect, then it would be a moral obligation with her, in justice to herself, to leave him.

Pamela draws Mr. B's attention to various social problems, and concentrates on creating a recognition in Mr. B of the male-dominated organizations which contribute to the suppression of women. She specifically refers to education and the disparity in the system which stereotypes women into playing only sex roles.

And why, pray, are not girls entitled to the same first education, though not to the same plays and diversions, as boys; so far, at least, as is supposed by Mr. Locke a mother can instruct them?

Would not this lay a foundation for their future improvement, and direct their inclinations to useful subjects, such as would make them above the imputations of some unkind gentlemen, who allot to their part common tea-table prattle, while they do all they can to make them fit for nothing else, and then upbraid them for it?³⁶

She realizes her aim of eradicating these educational differences, by giving the same education to her children, Billy, Davers, Charley,

³⁴ Ibid., p. 304.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 312.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 413.

and good Miss Goodwin and the sparkling-eyed Pamela. Pamela thus succeeds in establishing such a relationship with Mr. B, that Mr. B begins to feel obliged to seek her opinion in everything he does:

I never, my love, ask you a question, I wish you not to answer; and always expect your answer should be without reserve; for many times I may ask your opinion, as a corrective or a confirmation of my own judgement."³⁷

Pamela's struggle for self-realization and acceptance as a human being are manifestations of her interest in feminism, in liberation from the oppression of male supremacy.

II

Clarissa's uncle demands Clarissa's obedience to her brother James on the prerogative of his being a man: "Your brother, madam," he says "is your brother; a third older than yourself: and a man: and pray be so good as not to forget what is due to a brother...."³⁸ Clarissa, in protest against being victimized by the family schemes centering on plans to marry her to the "odious" Solmes, declares rebellion against her brother:

What right have you to dispose of my hand? If you govern everybody else, you shall not govern me; especially in a point so immediately relative to myself, and in which you neither have, now ever shall have, anything to do."³⁹

What have I done that I must be banished and confined thus disgracefully? That I must not be allowed to have any "free-will" in an article that concerns my present and future happiness?"⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid., p. 227.

³⁸ Clarissa, Vol. I, p. 164.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Later we hear Clarissa sounding her sister Bella,

I will know...why I am to be constrained thus? What is intended by it? and whether I am to be considered as a child or a slave?⁴¹

....

Compulsion shall do nothing with me. Though a slave, a prisoner in circumstance, I am no slave in my will.⁴²

And she writes to Anna, "But surely they will yield indeed I cannot."⁴³

These instances are important indications of Clarissa's assertion of individuality, her belief in her right to freedom, and in her right to choose the course of her life, her right to determine her own life-style. These examples are also charged with an enormous implication. Clarissa's revolt suggests her consciousness of the fact that "as long as woman accepts a situation imposed from outside, she will endanger her individuality and possibility for growth as a human being. She will in short be abdicating the potential of her nature by giving in to the demands of her situation. The more she resigns herself to the demands of her situation, the more she will stunt her human growth...."⁴⁴ What Clarissa seeks then in self-fulfillment and self-realization, which is the aim of every feminist. Bonnie Kreps the radical feminist says "self-fulfillment, is the starting point for the very large philosophical and political area known as radical feminism which chooses to concentrate on the oppression of women as women...." This segment of the Women's Liberation movement therefore concentrates its "analysis on institutions,

⁴¹ Ibid.; p. 227.

⁴² Ibid., Vol. III, p. 260

⁴³ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 63.

⁴⁴ "Radical Feminism I" in Radical Feminism, p. 236-237.

like love, marriage, sex, masculinity and femininity. It would be opposed specifically and centrally to sexism..."⁴⁵

Germaine Greer, another modern feminist, says "the essential factor in self-realization is independence, resistance to enculturation..."⁴⁶ Clarissa, recognizes the importance of independence for a self-realizing person. She escapes the oppressing situation in the family in search of freedom. She demonstrates great courage and a tremendous spirit of independence, which help her "decide to design" her own image "instead of the one that society rewards,"⁴⁷ which is perceptible in the assurances she gives Anna Howe again and again, about her disregard for the "event-judging world," "For myself, if I shall be enabled, on due reflection, to look back upon my own conduct, without the great reproach of having wilfully, and against the light of my own judgement, erred, I shall be more happy than if I had all that the world accounts desirable..."⁴⁸ Again she tells her, "As to the world and its censures, you know, my dear, that however desirous I always was of a fair fame, yet I never thought it right to give more than second place to the world's opinion...and what advantage would it be to me, were it retrievable and were I to live long, if I could not acquit 'myself to myself'?"⁴⁹ This is denotative of Clarissa's recognition of the fact that "forces of order and civilization react fairly directly to limit the possibilities of

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 238.

⁴⁶ The Female Eunuch (London, 1970) p. 145.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 146.

⁴⁸ Clarissa, Vol. I, p. 153

⁴⁹ Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 26.

self-realization,"⁵⁰ as Germaine Greer indicates. It all points toward her courageous attempt at creating a personal lifestyle, which directs our attention to a parallelism with the "Personal Liberation Groups" branch of the Women's Liberation Movement. "These groups see the source of their oppression in 'chauvinistic attitudes'...They become involved solely in 'personal liberation' attempts to create free-life-style and define new criteria for personal relations in the hoped for system of the future."⁵¹ The future that Clarissa looks forward to is what she has already indicated to Anna in her correspondence about the family schemes: "And yet, in my opinion the world is but one great family. Originally it was so. What then is this narrow selfishness that reigns in us, but relationship remembered against relationship forgot?"⁵² In a way Clarissa is hoping for the same kind of family organization as Germaine Greer. Germaine Greer is impatient with self-contained, self-centred familial system and advocates "an institution of self-regulating organic families."⁵³ "The point of an organic family" she says "is to release the children from the disadvantages of being extensions of their parents so that they can belong primarily to themselves. They may accept the services that adults perform for them naturally without establishing dependencies. There could be scope for them to initiate their own activities and define the mode and extent of their own learning,"⁵⁴ which in other words means freedom to choose their own life-styles without

⁵⁰ The Female Eunuch, p. 146.

⁵¹ Feminism to Liberation, p. 28.

⁵² Clarissa, Vol I, p. 34.

⁵³ The Female Eunuch, p. 236.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

being victimized by authoritarian rule of a patriarchal family. It is not unimaginable that Clarissa visualized a family organization which would rule out self-centredness and "narrow-selfishness." Considering that Clarissa expressed this view in bitterness about the family which was planning to sell the happiness of her entire life for economic benefit, and also considering her conflicting situation determined by her own independent nature and dependent status with heavy oppressions hanging over her, it is quite plausible to conjecture that Clarissa's dream anticipates Germaine Greer's "dream household" where "joy and serenity in living"⁵⁵ is attainable. Clarissa's own peace and happiness would be restored if the unreasonable control were revoked as she tells Anna: "And indeed could I be as easy and happy here as I used to be, I would defy that man and all his sex, and never repent that I have given the power of my fortune into my father's hands."⁵⁶ The criterion underlying the definition of relationships with others is in Anna's words, "Justice is due to ourselves, as well as to everybody else."⁵⁷ which Clarissa has repeatedly conveyed in what she phrases as "justify myself to myself."⁵⁸

Clarissa, in her attitudes, implies all along that her oppression is the result of sexist prejudices, which she makes clear in her reference to "I would defy that man and all his sex," in the above quote. She makes it doubly clear, when at the enormity of cruelty, in the

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 238.

⁵⁶ Clarissa, Vol. I, p. 25.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 245.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 144.

attitude of the male supremacist Lovelace, she in exasperated bewilderment writes to Anna: "I am sick of the Man!"⁵⁹ That she carries a resentment against the male sex is perceptible in her initial attitude toward Belford, whom she refuses to see while in the prison on the charge of a debt. "No-no-go, go, Man!" she says with an emphasis, and expresses her resentment by such exclamations as "with you! with men! Must go with men!" and agrees with Anna when she says "I heartily despise the sex."⁶⁰ Her resentment is perceived by Belford who writes to Lovelace "that revenge has very little sway in her mind; though she can retain so much proper 'resentment'?"⁶¹ "Misery" says Germaine Greer "is not borne without resentment,"⁶² and Clarissa has had enough misery to feel "resentment!" Clarissa's anti-male attitude indicates the existence of a latent hostility between the sexes, and is a trait that aligns her with the radical feminists, who concentrate on sexism, rather than "capitalism" or any other form of social system for attack.

Richardson's Clarissa, in her attitudes toward love, marriage and sex, once again anticipates Germaine Greer and through her relates to the Women's Liberation movement.

That Clarissa escapes with Lovelace is misconstrued by all to be for love. Even Anna Howe has her suspicions. To dispel Anna's suspicions, Clarissa writes to her that she has been tricked into

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 267.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 131.

⁶¹ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 456.

⁶² The Female Eunuch, p. 283.

running away with him, and her "preference" for him is "conditional" to his reformation. Even that conditional preference has been prompted by her desire "to be considered an example."⁶³ She tells Anna that

...secret pleasure intruded itself, to be able to reclaim such a man to the paths of virtue and honour: to be the secondary means, if I were to be his, of saving him, and preventing the mischiefs so enterprising a creature might otherwise be guilty of if he be such a one.⁶⁴

Clarissa has been provoked by a "vanity" which her "partial admirers" put into her head. It is for the gratification of her own vanity that she chooses Lovelace as a libidinous object. "Self here, which is at the bottom of all we do and all we wish, is the grand misleader,"⁶⁵ she explains to Anna. It is self-love, then, that has prompted the choice of Lovelace for her libidinal investment. Germaine Greer says:

From the earliest moments of life, human love is a function of narcissism. The infant who perceives his own self and the external world as the same thing loves everything until he learns to fear harm. The baby accepts reality because he has no ego.

....

Even when his ego is forming he must learn to understand himself in terms of his relationships to other people and other people in terms of himself. The more his self-esteem is eroded, the lower the opinion that he has of his fellows; the more inflated his self-esteem the more he expects of his friends....⁶⁶

In Richardson's *Clarissa*, this interaction finds the most revealing

⁶³ *Clarissa*, Vol. II, p. 378.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 200.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 379.

⁶⁶ *The Female Eunuch*, p. 140-41.

expression. Clarissa, explaining her psychic dilemma in this connection, writes to Anna:

Indeed, my dear, I think I could prefer him to all the men I ever knew, were he but to be always what he has been this day...It is a difficult thing, I believe, sometimes, for a young creature that is able to deliberate with herself, to know when she loves, or when she hates: but I am resolved, as much as possible, to be determined both in my hatred and love by actions as they make the man worthy or unworthy.⁶⁷

Hence, when Lovelace's actions fail to convince her of his love and esteem, she rejects him, totally and completely. She explains to Captain Tomlinson who urges her to forgive Lovelace:

But he is so sunk with me! To fire the house! An artifice so vile! — contrived for the worst of purposes!...Mr. Lovelace is a vindictive man! He could not love the creature whom he could insult as he has insulted me...In short I never, never can forgive him.⁶⁸

She renounces him forever in the famous words:

That the man who has been the villain to me you have been, shall never make me his wife.⁶⁹

That love which offers insult to her integrity and seeks to possess her by force is not love. Her rejection is a manifestation of her resentment and her anti-male attitude. "We must fight," the radical feminists say, "the corrupt notion we now call love — love which is based on control of another rather than on love for the growth of another."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Clarissa, Vol. II, p. 225

⁶⁸ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 138

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 222

⁷⁰ Bonnie Kreps, "Radical Feminism 1" in Radical Feminism, p. 239.

There is another reason why Clarissa cannot love Lovelace:

Love is not possible between inferior and superior, because the base cannot free their love from selfish interest, either as the desire for security, or social advantage, and, being lesser, they themselves cannot comprehend the faculties in the superior which are worthy of love. The superior being on the other hand cannot demean himself by love for an inferior; his feeling must be tinged with condescension or else partake of perversion and a deliberate self-abasement. The proper subject for love is one's equal, seeing the essence of love is to be mutual, and the lesser cannot produce anything greater than itself.⁷¹

Clarissa's denunciation of Lovelace is on grounds of inequality in minds. Very early, even before he has offered her any real affront, she writes to Anna:

A principal consolation arising from these favorable appearances, is that I, who have now but one only friend, shall most probably, and, if it be not my own fault, have as many new ones as there are persons in Mr. Lovelace's family...And who knows, but that by degrees, those new friends, by their rank and merit, may have weight enough to get me restored to the favour of my relations? Tell which can be effected, I shall not be tolerably easy. Happy I never expect to be. Mr. Lovelace's mind and mine are vastly different; different in essentials.⁷²

The analogy between Germaine Greer and Richardson becomes even more forcefully expressed in Clarissa's explanation as to why she cannot think of uniting with Lovelace in marriage:

It is the fate in unequal unions, that tolerable creatures, through them, frequently incur censure, when more happily yoked, they might be entitled to praise. And shall I not shun a union with a man that might lead into errors a creature who flatters herself that she is blest with an inclination to be good; and who wishes to make every one happy with whom she has any connection, even to her very servants?

⁷¹ The Female Eunuch, p. 139-40. §

⁷² Clarissa, Vol. II, p. 418.

Formerly, indeed, I hoped to be an humble means of reforming him. But, when I have no such hope, is it right to make a venture that shall endanger my own morals?⁷³

Lovelace, symbolizes sexual threat. Mrs. Van Gheent gives a detailed analysis of this symbol, from whom I will quote verbatim:

Clarissa screams, when she sees Lovelace in the garden, "A man!" "Ah, this man, my dear!" she exclaims to Miss Howe. "The man, my dear, looked quite ugly!" She tells her friend, after a predatory approach on Lovelace's part. She speaks of his "savage kiss" reddening her hand. Miss Howe confirms her notions of men: they are a "vile race of reptiles."⁷⁴

Clarissa, who has escaped for freedom and self-fulfillment, resents Lovelace's attitude. She tolerates him only because of her state of obligation, but she is firm in her resolution of not deserting herself. That he has laid a snare to trick her, "out of myself," as she says, is an unbearable thought to her. Though tricked into his power, she is not meanly subjugated to it, and to be "threatened into his will, I know not how to bear that."⁷⁵ Clarissa's argument finds agreement with Germaine Greer. Quoting Rogers, she says "we can love a person only to the extent we are not threatened by him."⁷⁶

Germaine Greer asserts that they who cannot love themselves, cannot love each other in an easy and spontaneous way. There is a whole philosophy implied in Germaine Greer's assertion of the desirability of narcissism as the root of all love. Her philosophy is embedded in Nora Helmer's rebellious assertion to her husband

⁷³ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 139.

⁷⁴ "Clarissa Harlowe," in Samuel Richardson, ed. John Carroll, p. 55

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 374

⁷⁶ The Female Eunuch, p. 145

of her duty to herself :

I have another duty, just as sacred...my duty to myself
...I believe that before everything else I am a human being—
just as much as you are...or at any rate I shall try to
become one. I know quite well that most people would agree
with you, Torvald, and that you have a warrant for it in books;
but I can't be satisfied any longer with what most people say,
and with what's in books. I must think things out of
myself and try to understand them.⁷⁷

Interestingly enough, Clarissa too, as Pamela before her, recognises
such a duty when she asserts her right to happiness, and her right
to choose her own way of life. She tells her brother:

I think myself so much entitled to resent your infamous
hint, and this as well for the sake of my sex, as for
my own, that I ought to declare, as I do, that I will not
receive any more of your letters, unless commanded to do so
by an authority I never will dispute; except in a case where
I think my future as well as my present happiness concerned.⁷⁸

Again when she asks Lovelace, "Am I to be cruel to myself, to show
mercy to you? ...Shall I to promote your happiness, as you call it,
destroy all my future peace of mind,"⁷⁹ She makes it clear that she
perceives duty to herself as sacred as Nora does, she sees it as a
moral obligation. All Richardson's heroines consider this duty to
"myself" as sacred. The implication is that it is morally wrong to
leave everything to others; to be dependent on someone else is to
"abdicate one's own moral understanding, to tolerate crimes against
humanity...To deny that a mistake has been made when its results
are chaos visible and tangible on all sides, that is irresponsibility.
What oppression lays upon us is not responsibility but guilt."⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ibsen, The Doll's House, Act III. Quoted in The Female Eunuch, p. 19.

⁷⁸ Clarissa, Vol. I, p. 258.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 399, 479.

⁸⁰ The Female Eunuch, p. 19.

That Clarissa recognises duty to herself as a duty to humanity, is made clear in her reference to "myself and this as well for the sake of my sex" in the above quote.

There is also a parallelism between what Germaine Greer says and Clarissa implies in her views on marriage. Germaine Greer suggests that women ought not to enter socially sanctioned relationships like marriage. Marriage, according to Germaine Greer gives a subordinate status to women. She considers marriage an enemy of free women, and says "If women are to effect a significant amelioration in their condition it seems obvious that they must refuse to marry."⁸¹

Richardson of course is for everybody to marry. But his Clarissa is more inclined to agree with Germaine Greer and avoid the subordinate status. That her disinterest in marriage is provoked by her resentment of male domination is hardly difficult to perceive. She defines her views on marriage to Anna:

I think as men were the framers of the matrimonial office, and made obedience a part of the woman's vow, she ought not, even in policy, to show him that she can break through her part of the contract (however lightly she may think of the instance) lest he should take it into his head (himself his judge) to think as lightly of other points, which she may hold more important - - but indeed no point so solemnly vowed can be slight.⁸²

What Clarissa implies here is that marriage is a male-dominated institution, and since men have been the law-makers, they have made laws to justify their own tyranny.

Again, in the explanation that Clarissa gives her uncle John

⁸¹ The Female Eunuch, p. 319.

⁸² Clarissa, Vol. I, p. 199.

as to the necessity of freedom of choice in marriage, it is very evident that Clarissa, like Pamela, considers marriage an institution of oppression,

Her aversion to marriage is clearly indicated in her constant harping on her preference for single life. Though the main reason why Clarissa rejects marriage is the woman's supportive and subservient state, she has complex other motives which compel a decision against it.

Clarissa's unconscious oedipal hold on the authoritarian parental ties prevent her from desiring marriage. Her resentment against her father's domination is mixed with a good deal of guilt and unconscious oedipal love expressed in continued attempts to convince herself that her father is in reality a loveable man, and, as a daughter should, she loves him. "I am independent of you Sir; though I never desire to be so of my father,"⁸³ She tells her brother James. She says to Lovelace that she would give up the world and "all my hopes in it, to have been still in my father's house, whatever had been the usage,"⁸⁴ and Lovelace is prompted to remark:

Something more than woman, an angel in some things; but a baby in others: so father - sick! So family-fond! what a poor chance stands a husband with such a wife, unless, for-sooth, they vouch-safe to be reconciled to her and continue to be reconciled!⁸⁵

The threat of an incestuous relationship frightens her into looking upon marriage with dread. In spite of the oedipal clings

⁸³ Ibid., p. 389.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 498.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 187.

and the sense of filial piety, Clarissa feels compelled to rebel against her father in order to preserve her own integrity from the intrusion of parental ties.

Clarissa, as we have seen, is a passionate pilgrim in search of self-fulfillment, and an union with unequals would be frustrating to her. Both Richardson and Germaine Greer have justifiably argued the point as has already been seen.

Again it is Clarissa's sense of conscious superiority, and regard for selfhood that creates a revulsion toward accepting the prescribed feminine role of a wife. Pauline B. Bart says:

Role and self-concept are intimately interconnected. Some roles are more central for one's self-image than others; self-esteem comes from adequacy in these more salient roles... For most people, the social structure determines which roles these are. Because the most important roles for women in society are the roles of wife and mother, the loss of either of these roles might result in a loss of self-esteem.⁸⁶

Clarissa, we have seen, values not the world's opinion more than her own self-esteem so that even when she is expected to marry Lovelace after the rape, which would be the conventionally right thing to do, she rejects him. Her rebellion against convention, is but another indication of her courage to defy society and create for herself an alternative life-style, which attitude secures for her and her creator, an indisputable place in the Women's Liberation Movement.

That her anti-marriage attitude has been generated by her antagonism towards men is explicit in the following quotation:

⁸⁶ "Depression in Middle-Aged Women," in Women in Sexist Society, Vivian Gornick & Barbara Moran, eds. (New York, 1971), p. 106.

Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man. Preserve me from the violent man.

Who imagines mischief in his heart.

He hath sharpened his tongue like a serpent. Adder's poison is under his lips.

Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked. Preserve me from the violent man; who hath purposed to overthrow my goings.

He hath hid a snare for me. He hath spread a net by the wayside.

He hath set gins for me in the way wherein I walked.

....

Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; further not his devices, lest he exalt himself.⁸⁷ (Emphasis is mine)

Lovelace explains to us Clarissa's references. The "gin," the "snare" and the "net" mean matrimony, he tells us. It is clear, then, that Clarissa looks upon marriage as a trap wherein woman is trapped by man to "exalt himself." Thus sexual relations begin to conform to the disposition of power, and woman becomes confined to powerlessness and dependence. Germaine Greer too indicates the same when she says, "Sex must be rescued from the traffic between powerful and powerless, ...masterful and mastered..."⁸⁸ Hence the validity of her assertion, to quote again: "If women are to effect a significant amelioration in their condition it seems obvious that they must refuse to marry." Hence also the inevitability of Clarissa's death after the sexual intercourse.

"Being forced to play the role of a woman in sexual intercourse is the deepest imaginable humiliation,"⁸⁹ says Germaine Greer.

Richardson shows an inclination to agree with her when he makes

⁸⁷ Clarissa, Vol. IV, p. 140.

⁸⁸ The Female Eunuch, p. 18.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 250.

his Clarissa suffer deep anguish for Lovelace's "sadistic act of taking possession."⁹⁰ In protest against the male ego Clarissa dies. In her exaggerated horror at Lovelace's sexual contact with her, an act about which she admits no moral guilt whatever, Clarissa might suggest certain radical feminists who regard any heterosexual activity as oppressive.⁹¹

One of the great aims of women's liberation has been sisterhood. "It is the bonding of those who have never bonded before, for the purpose of overcoming sexism and its effects...."⁹² Clarissa's sense of sisterhood is evident in the complaint she writes to Anna about Arabella for her part in the family schemes:

Should not sisters be sisters to each other? Should they not make a *common* cause of it, as I may say, a cause of sex, on such occasions as the present?⁹³ (Emphasis is mine.)

Without suggesting overt lesbianism, that Clarissa and Anna may also have a latent sexual attraction to each other is occasionally indicated. It may appear in Anna's readiness to empathize with Clarissa. Anna writing about Mrs. Howe's praise of Clarissa tells her, "No matter; the praise was yours. You are me and I enjoyed it...."⁹⁴ Douglas Morgan in his interpretation of Freud tells us that:

⁹⁰ Helene Deutsch's view of sexual intercourse as a sadistic act of taking possession on the part of man, and a masochistic subjugation on the part of woman, as quoted by Viola Klein in The Feminine Character, p. 84.

⁹¹ Kate Millett in the literary instances she discusses in Sexual Politics, argues that the sexual act and sexual relationship is a microcosm of society exhibiting the universal oppression of women.

⁹² Mary Daly, "The Spiritual Dimension of Women's Liberation," in Radical Feminism, p. 265.

⁹³ Clarissa, Vol. I, p. 62.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 43.

The highest phase of development of which object libido is capable is seen in the state of being in love when the subject seems to give up his own personality in favour of an object cathexis...⁹⁵

This explains the significance of Anna's empathy with Clarissa.

That Clarissa, too, considers Anna her "object cathexis" is indicated in all the tender appellations she uses to refer to her. "Sweet and ever-amiable friend - companion - sister - lover!"⁹⁶ She kisses Anna's miniature portrait several times, once at each tender appellation.

Anna makes these inclinations doubly clear when she mourns Clarissa thus: "And now my better-half is torn from me, what shall I do?"⁹⁷

That their affectionate feelings are an expression of a resentful response to male domination, which in fact is the motivation behind the gay liberationists' propaganda for lesbianism, is clearly indicated by Anna when she tells Clarissa:

Upon my word, I most heartily despise the sex! I wish they would let our father's and mother's alone; teasing us with their golden promises, and protestations, and settlements, and the rest of their ostentatious nonsense. *How charmingly might you and I live together, and despise them all!* But to be cajoled, wiredrawn, and ensnared; like silly birds into a state of bondage or vile subordination: to be courted as princesses for a few weeks, in order to be treated as slaves for the rest of our lives. Indeed, my dear, as you say of Solmes I cannot endure it!⁹⁸ (Emphasis is mine.)

This resentful response receives more emphatic expression in Anna's lament:

O may we meet and rejoice together, where no villainous

⁹⁵ Love: Plato, The Bible and Freud. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964), p. 139.

⁹⁶ Clarissa, Vol. IV, p. 340.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 404.

⁹⁸ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 131.

Lovelaces, no hard-hearted relations, will ever shock our innocence and ruffle our felicity...⁹⁹

According to the Radical lesbians, a lesbian is:

A woman, who, at an early age, acts in accordance with an inner compulsion to be a more complete human being than her society will allow her [to be]. These needs and conflicts, over a period of years, bring her into painful conflict with people, situations, and the accepted way of thinking, until she is in a continual state of war with everything around her and usually with herself. She may not be fully conscious of the political implications of what for her began as a personal necessity, but on some level, she has not been able to accept the limitations and oppressions laid upon her by the most basic role in society, the female role.¹⁰⁰

This definition may throw some light on the history of Clarissa Harlowe.

Clarissa's refrain "BUT GOD ALMIGHTY WOULD NOT LET ME DEPEND FOR COMFORT UPON ANY BUT HIMSELF"¹⁰¹ is a symbolic representation of the ultimate in an independent life-style. It also indicates that women's liberation is a doorway to a more authentic search for transcendence, that is for God.

III

Harriet Byron like Pamela and unlike Clarissa and Clementina finds fulfillment in a meaningful relationship with a man of sense, who knows how to show deference to her personality, and who can take offense at her passive submissiveness. Sir Charles tells her, "Blame me always when you think me wrong. I shall doubt your love if you give me reason to question your freedom."¹⁰² She is so much herself, has maintained her individuality to such an extent, that she can happily write to Mrs. Shirley, "Everybody for Sir Charles's sake,

⁹⁹ Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 403.

¹⁰⁰ Sidney Abbot & Barbara Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?" in Woman in Sexist Society, pp. 440-441.

¹⁰¹ Clarissa, Vol. IV, p. 339.

¹⁰² Sir Charles Grandison, Vol. VII, p. 96.

looks on me with the kindest partiality; and my heart tells me that being his as much as my own, it deserves that partiality."¹⁰³

Like Pamela, Harriet does not have to struggle to establish herself in Sir Charles's esteem. That priority which Pamela secures after passing through ordeals, Harriet always enjoys. Sir Charles, unlike Mr. B or Lovelace, looks upon Harriet as his equal and lovingly requests her:

My dearest life you must advise me. I will not take any important step, whether relative to myself or friends, but by your advice, and if you please, Dr. Bartlett's. Whenever, heretofore, I have had time to take that good man's, I have been sure of the ground I stood upon. He has been of infinite service to me, as you have heard me often acknowledge. Yours and his will establish his judgment in every case...¹⁰⁴

Apart from some psychological stress, Harriet does not have to face any serious moral issues like Richardson's other heroines. She is in the least complicated situation. She is independent of any familial restrictions, and recognises none from outside. Like Clarissa and Pamela she too believes in duty to herself as of paramount importance. She tells Sir Hargrave, "It would be very grievous to me, if I had not the liberty...to act, so to govern myself,...as should leave me well satisfied with myself."¹⁰⁵

Harriet Byron does not yearn for "something more" like either Pamela or Clarissa and Clementina; neither does she suffer from that "mysterious ailment" Betty Friedan diagnosed in the suburban wives of America. Harriet's human growth for this reason is not stunted, nor is she not a self-realizing person. Self-realization consists in

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 223.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 140.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 141.

"the individual affirming his existence and his potentialities as a being ~~his~~ his own right;...The premise is that man is happy, self-accepting, healthy without guilt, only when he is fulfilling himself and becoming what he can be."¹⁰⁶ This thinking, however, does not find approval with Betty Friedan, according to whom

Housewives who live according to the feminine mystique do not have a personal purpose stretching into the future. But without such a purpose to evoke their full abilities, they cannot grow to self-realization...

If women's needs for identity, for self-esteem, for achievement, and finally for expression of her unique human individuality are not recognised by herself or others in our culture, she's forced to seek identity and self-esteem in the only channels open to her: the pursuit of sexual fulfillment, motherhood, and the possession of material things. And, chained to these pursuits, she is stunted at a lower level of living, blocked from the realization of her higher human needs.

....

The feminine mystique implies a choice between "being a woman" or risking the pains of human growth.¹⁰⁷

The only consideration in quoting from Betty Friedan at such length is to show how much more liberal is Richardson in his attitudes toward women. To be true to one's intrinsic nature is real liberty, a liberty that is not enquired into. Betty Friedan imposes restrictions by demanding women to be frustrated with the roles they are happy to play. Her detection of "the problem with no name" was based on her study of unfulfilled wives. The generalization she arrives at is really as serious a misrepresentation as she finds Freud's theory about women to be, because Freud deduced his theory from the

¹⁰⁶ The Feminine Mystique, pp. 299.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 304-305.

study of Victorian women. By the same logic Betty Friedan can be questioned.

From this point of view, Richardson's Harriet Byron is moving in a world of larger freedoms. She has not lost the courage to be an individual. "For have not women souls as well as men, and souls as capable of noblest attainments as theirs?"¹⁰⁸ she asks. She even advocates the cultivation of the "beauties of mind" which tells us that Harriet is not brainwashed by the feminine mystique as Betty Friedan would tend to insinuate in such cases.

Clementina unlike Harriet Byron and Pamela and like Clarissa seeks liberation from sex roles. Like Clarissa she insists on her preference for single life. "I will go into the nunnery"¹⁰⁹ her constant refrain. Like her again she would like to be the spouse of the Redeemer only and that for "my own peace of mind"¹¹⁰ she tells us. She too then like Pamela, Harriet Byron and Clarissa considers duty to self important.

Clementina's struggle between love and religion is a symbolic representation of her struggle to liberate herself from the oppression of institutionalized Christianity, whose ethics have greatly contributed toward the product and support of sexism, and the oppressive institution of marriage. Traditional Christianity supports the view that Christ is the head of every man, and the head of every woman is man, which view demands from Clementina, in case of marriage, and in the name of religion, subjection to the husband's will. Hence

¹⁰⁸ Sir Charles Grandison, Vol. I, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 201.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 167, 202.

Clementina, who glories in the idea of commanding "her own destiny,"¹¹¹ which indicates her desire for an independent life-style, cannot really marry Sir Charles in spite of her love for him. The powerlessness and loss of independence she anticipates in the role of a wife is powerfully expressed in her almost agonised exclamation:

Oh, Sir! You leave me not at liberty...on this crisis of time depends an eternity of happiness or misery... Seek not to entangle me by thy love!¹¹²

She calls upon Sir Charles himself to support her in her resolution not to marry him. "I am sure, almost sure," she says "that seeing my scruples, and the rectitude of my purpose, he will himself generously support me in my resolution,"¹¹³ thus adding a meaningful dimension to love, where love means uniting to overcome sexist oppression.

The suffering that Clementina undergoes by the loss of reason in this struggle for liberation symbolizes that suffering which has been so highly esteemed in Christianity, and evinces her existential courage. (This is the courage to risk social security and social approval. There is also the anxiety of guilt over refusing to do what her whole family demands.)

Oh my mamma! how well do you deserve, even implicit obedience, from a daughter who has overclouded your happy days! You never knew discomfort till your hapless Clementina gave it you! The sacrifice of my life would be a poor atonement for what I have made you suffer.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 113.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 200, 166.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 178.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 73.

To affirm in the face of all this requires courage.

The ultimate yielding of her patriarchal family to her wishes, even though she on her own decides against marrying the protestant Sir Charles Grandison, suggests that self-realization or the "becoming of women" can bring about "a transvaluation of values," and "Faith can be understood in a non-authoritarian and Universal sense."¹¹⁵ Clementina's struggle for liberation adds a spiritual dimension to the idea of Women's Liberation. However as Dr. Mary Daly tells us, the Women's Movement is a spiritual movement because it aims at humanization of women and therefore of the species. "At its core it is spiritual in the deepest sense of the word, because it means the self-actualization of creative human potential in the struggle against oppression."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Mary Daly, "The Spiritual Dimension of Women's Liberation," in Radical Feminism, p. 264.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

This study has revealed Richardson's far-sightedness in anticipating some of the important trends and issues in the Women's Liberation Movement.

Pamela and Harriet Byron are feminists who do not decry the wife-mother roles, but seek an individual definition and recognition as human beings. Clarissa aims at complete freedom from male dependence, and Clementina's struggles for self-realization reveal the spiritual dimension of the Women's Liberation Movement.

However, it would be wrong to suggest that anticipation means approval. For example, Clarissa's radical feminist tendencies neither indicate that Richardson believed women who fight for self-realization would incline toward denying what nature has decreed for them, nor suggest that all feminists would ultimately lean towards extremist thinking. Richardson's anticipatory talent only reveals that his attitude is one of illuminating all aspects of the problem.

The analysis of Richardson's feminism directs our attention, at least by implication, to the fact that the general tone of his novels is one of regret for women's limited opportunities for fulfillment as human beings. Richardson looks forward to a time when men and women, without denying their differences, could function as

- true equals.¹

In view of this, Richardson should be credited with having anticipated in certain important respects the Women's Liberation Movement.

1 To emancipate woman is to refuse to confine her to the relations she bears to man, not to deny them to her; let her have her independent existence and she will continue nonetheless to exist for him also; mutually recognising each other as subject, each will yet remain for the other an other. Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, H.M. Parshley, trans. (London, 1953), p. 731.

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